

A

"The Canadian Monthly" Prize Tale.

COLLECTION
OF
CANADIAN AUTHORS.

For King and Country:

A STORY OF 1812.

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TORONTO:
ADAM, STEVENSON & CO.
1874.

*Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year
One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy-four, by ADAM,
STEVENSON & Co., in the Office of the Minister of Agriculture.*

BELL & CO.,
Printers,
Toronto.

To All Young Canadians

THIS TALE IS DEDICATED,

*In the hope that the memories which it records
may stimulate them to endeavour, in the
strength of that righteousness which
alone exalteth a nation, to make
the future of CANADA
abundantly worthy
of its past.*

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FOR KING AND COUNTRY:

A STORY OF 1812.

CHAPTER I.

AN AFTERNOON SIXTY YEARS AGO.

"This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand, like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic."

A SOFT, balmy afternoon in the beginning of June, just in that sweet hopeful season when the spring-time, with its blossoms of promise, is passing into the richer bloom of the early summer;—there could scarcely have been a fairer day for exploring the "forest primeval." The forenoon had been slightly showery, wavering between tears and smiles; now the smiles had conquered, and the sun shone softly out between the tender-tinted gray and pearly clouds that dappled a sky of purest blue. The sunbeams, seeming the brighter for the preceding rain, glistened on the wet glossy leaves of the "May," that starred the forest depths with its snowy blossoms, and upon the bright scarlet columbines that nodded among the

ferns, which clustered in nook and cranny of the lichened rocks, here and there cropping out from the wooded ridge that rose by the wayside. Farther off, they flickered in a golden network in the winding vistas that occasionally opened to view some of the dim forest recesses, which might well tempt a dreamy, poetic wanderer to penetrate depths so lonely, so untrodden,—where the jarring noises of the world are silent,—where carking cares might be forgotten,—where still the Great Spirit might speak, as of old, to his Indian children, in the soft rustling of the leaves and the *soughing* of the breezes, which seem caught and embodied in the melancholy, musical cadences of the Indian tongue.

But reality is sometimes stronger than romance, and the passengers of the lumbering waggon, by courtesy styled a "stage," which carried persons and goods between York and Newark,* on the primitive road, in the year 1812, were more keenly conscious of the drawbacks of the mode of locomotion than of the "impulse of a vernal wood;"—sundry sensations reminding them uncomfortably that they were composed of matter as well as spirit, and had other organs than eyes and ears. Not that the mosquitoes, the great scourge of the Canadian woods, were as yet in full force; only an occasional skir-

* NOTE.—Newark was the name given to what is now the town of Niagara, at the mouth of the Niagara river. Fort George was situated about half a mile above the village,

misher or two of the advanced guard hinted what they would be ere long. But the road ! Prettily as it wound up and down, through dell and ravine, past the wood-crowned heights that rose beside it, it was a weary way, nevertheless, to those who sat on the hard seats of the springless waggon, as it swayed and bumped at a tedious pace over ruts and stones and long stretches of corduroy bridges that crossed the wayside "creeks," or the black moist intervals of otherwise impassable bog which nourished such rich, waving ferns, and such a luxuriant vegetation, and were altogether so inviting and so deceitful.

The passengers of the stage driven by John Wardle on that particular day of June, 1812, were as dissimilar in the traits that make up the outward man as in the more important characteristics which constitute the inner one. The one who sat beside the driver, and who would at first sight have attracted most notice, was unmistakeably a British officer in undress uniform. He might have been recognised as such, even without the military accoutrements, the clanking spurs, the sword, the military cap with the figures "41," denoting the regiment to which he belonged. As unmistakeably did his English birth appear in the fair though sunburnt complexion, the chestnut hair with its broken gleams of gold, the clearly cut, refined features, and the bright, keen, grey-blue eye which, if it seemed a trifle cold, could take in so much at a glance. There was perhaps a slight haughtiness of expression about

the curved lips, bespeaking a certain amount of pride in the *sangre azul* of the old English race, combined, at the present moment, with an expression of discontent deeper than the mere discomforts of the journey could have called forth; while he occasionally glanced wistfully back at the handsome bay steed which, walking slightly lame, docilely followed the stage of its own accord, but with a sort of mute protest in its intelligent face, that wore as marked an expression of disgust as an equine physiognomy can.

The seats next in rear of the driver were occupied by a sharp-visaged, shabbily-dressed man, whose intonation and style of expression indicated plainly enough that he hailed from the other side of the line; and by a saturnine, sallow-complexioned individual of slender build, who spoke with a broad Scotch accent, and whose general aspect, combined with the air of dissatisfaction and incipient radicalism that characterized his occasional remarks, would have proclaimed him either a tailor or a shoemaker, while the packages of leather beside him showed to which of the two sedentary crafts he belonged.

Next to these sat a farmer and his wife, clad in stout home-spun, the former with a cheerful, wrinkled, weather-beaten face, that looked as if he had seen many a day of tough, honest toil, and bright watchful eyes, that gleamed out from under their grey pent-houses of eyebrow with an expression that led one instinctively to trust him; and

the other with a gentle, placid countenance, half hidden behind the snowy cap-frills and the grey Quaker bonnet that shaded it. They were accompanied by sundry large packages of groceries and other household necessities, which they had been laying in at the nearest village, and the gentle voice of the old woman was occasionally employed in quieting the restlessness of a pair of fowls of an improved breed which she was carrying home to her own poultry yard.

On the last seat of all sat a quiet, commercial-looking man, a Newark "store-keeper," who had been travelling on business; and beside him, shrinking shyly into the farthest corner of the seat, a squaw, her dark eyes gleaming, half-frightened, out of her blanket, or bent down in maternal tenderness over the swaddled papoose that lay in its primitive wooden cradle on her knee. Notwithstanding the occasional friendly overtures of the good woman in front of her, who was drawn towards her by feminine and maternal sympathies, she looked solitary and sad, like a bird of strange feather among an alien race.

Among so heterogeneous a party, so placed, there could be but little general conversation, and the talk limited itself chiefly to an interchange of inquiries and laconic replies between the keen-visaged American and his Scotch fellow-traveller, and to the desultory remarks that passed between the English officer and the driver, who still spoke

with a strong south-country accent, and who, loquacious in any case, was evidently delighted with the chance of talking so familiarly to one of His Majesty's officers.

"And this is supposed to be an inn?" exclaimed the officer. The jaded horses were drawing up, of their own accord, before a rough log cabin, flanked by a rude driving shed, with a primitive pump, and a long log hollowed out for a horse-trough, in front. A stick, placed upright in a stump before the door, bore an inscription, which, after some study, could be resolved into the name of "Barney Finnigan," and the intimation below that "wiskey and tabacky" were to be had within. Two or three chubby, barefooted children were rolling about in a puppy-like fashion among the tall grass and weeds by the way-side, and a lazy-looking Irishman, in home-spun shirt, with hands plunged into the pockets of his dilapidated breeches, stood leaning in the open doorway smoking a short pipe.

"Yes, yer honour;" replied John; "and handy enough it comes for the poor beasts, though it beant much like our Red Lion at home, where my father used to have his pipe and his mug o' beer when I was a boy! Hallo, Barney!—taking it easy, as usual?"

"Shure, an' isn't it the best thing a craythur can do? An' it's glad I am to see yez. An hour beyant time, John Wardle! An' 'twas meself thought yez must have broken down. An' it's dry the poor bastes is lookin'—the craythurs!"

"Got a heavy load in to-day, Barney, that's how it is," said John, as he began to take out the horses to water, and give them a short rest out of harness. Meantime the passengers got out, too, to rest themselves by a change of posture. The stout farmer helped out his wife, and then kindly offered to assist the squaw to dismount. As he did so, a tall, good-looking Indian, in a deer-skin tunic, with a rifle on his shoulder, who had been waiting, unobserved, in the shadow of the forest, gravely came forward, and after a few words had been exchanged with great apparent *sang-froid* and indifference, the two walked silently away,—the Indian shouldering the woman's little bundle, and the squaw her papoose.

The officer, whose baggage denoted his proper destination to be "Francis Percival, Captain H. M. 41st Foot," was meantime leading his horse also to water, and his interested gaze followed the silent, grave couple as they retreated.

"Strange folk yon," said John, who stood close by, undoing straps and bearing reins. "You'll never see them smile or look pleased about anything! Now, that fellow would be shot before he'd let a soul see he was pleased to get his wife and child back!"

"Do they live about here?" asked the Captain.

"Oh, he's one of the General's Indian warriors—a chief, and one he trusts a good deal;—and they've a camp not far off. She's been away among her people on Lake

Erie ; he's never seen the young 'un before, but he wouldn't seem to want to look at it before hus ; not but what he's like some English folk I've seen ;" added John, with a half deprecatory glance at the officer, as if to see whether he had gone too far.

Captain Percival, however, only smiled slightly at the idea of extremes meeting in English and Indian impassiveness. The smile quickly passed away, and the discontented, almost sad expression returned, as he stroked his charger's glossy flanks.

"Hector, poor fellow !" he said, as he watched the thirsty animal drink, "this is something new for you ! You're not used to roads like these," and he gently took up the lame foot to examine it.

"A splendid animal," said John, still lingering near. "We don't often see the likes of him ! Pretty nigh thorough-bred, ain't he now ?" queried he, with an appreciative air, as he surveyed the clean, slender fetlocks, the graceful flanks and arching neck.

"Yes, he comes of a good stock ; but he looks rather a different horse from what he did when he left England. He had a rough time of it at sea ;—that gave his foot a twist, and your rough Canadian roads have made it worse."

"Oh, it'll soon come all right again, yer honour," said John, as he went off for his talk and smoke with Barney ; while Captain Percival, not inclined to accept the offer of "wiskey and tobacky," and preferring the sweet open air,

laden with forest fragrance, to the close atmosphere of the "inn," sat down with folded arms on a mossy log, under a spreading maple, whose fallen tasselled blossoms strewed the ground around him. His depressed air and contracted brow showed that his meditations were not specially agreeable, and if his inward soliloquy had found expression, it would have run somewhat in this wise :—

"So this is the way I've got to serve my king and country ! Bumping over logs and through marshes, among savages and wildernesses ; to be buried alive in these out-of-the-way backwoods, just when Europe's all astir, and there are such grand opportunities for winning honour and promotion ! It is hard upon a man, after being disabled so long, and dreaming of real work and glory, to be out here in this sort of exile. If I had only been in the 45th now, with Harry Dacre and Jack Hunsden and the rest of them, I might at this moment be with Lord Wellington in Spain ; and won't they have a grand time of it !"

Captain Percival was joining, for the first time, his regiment in Canada. The injuries occasioned by a fall from his horse in hunting had caused a long period of forced inactivity, and detained him unwillingly at home on sick leave. But, now that he was again fit for active duty, it was only with great reluctance, and after several unsuccessful endeavors to exchange into a regiment more likely to see service in Europe, that he had yielded to circumstances, and come to what was considered little better than

a howling wilderness—a country of Hyperboreans and bears.

Captain Percival continued to chew the cud of disquieting meditation till John Wardle returned to his horses' heads, and his fellow-passengers prepared to resume their seats. The "Yankee," however, who had been partaking of Barney Finnigan's hospitalities, including the "wiskey," removed from under his seat his small bundle, tied up in a blue bandanna, and saying he "calculated he'd be nearer his journey's end if he walked on from here," disappeared by the same cross-path which the Indian couple had followed. Captain Percival, as he sprang last into his seat beside the driver, found the others exchanging suspicious surmises respecting their late fellow-traveller.

"I don't like the cut of his figure head much," remarked John, shaking his grizzled head; "we've had more than one such customer of late, and it's all I can do to keep from collarin' them, with their brag about 'beatin' the Britishers,' and their eternal questions."

"Ay! ay! that chap'll no lose his way for want o' askin' it," interposed the saturnine Scotchman—Davie Watson by name,—“an' his business is no all aboveboard, I'll be boun'! What do ye say, Maister Thurstane? ye'll hae seen lads like yon before?”

The keen eyes of the old farmer had taken steady measure of the stranger. His reply was quiet, half-careless;—

"It is easy to see he's after no good, whatever his errand is. Pity there's no law to take up such fellows as vagrants."

"Do you think the fellow's a spy?" inquired Captain Percival, roused from his listlessness to some interest in the conversation, and addressing the farmer.

Jacob Thurstane took a pinch of snuff before he replied:—"Well, it's not my way to say things I can't prove; but I'd be sorry to give him any news I could help giving. They're sharp fellows, those Yankees, and they're sure to have their eyes open for anything they can find out just now."

"Do you think they really mean fight, then?"

"Mean it? Yes! and we'll see it before long, sir, sure as my name's Thurstane. Hasn't the storm been brewing these five years and more—ever since the *Leopard* raked down the *Chesapeake*? That was an ugly business, and the Yankees have never forgotten it; and what the folk at home are about, not to see the breakers ahead, I can't make out."

Well, they're having rather a lively time of it in Europe, you know, with Boney and all the rest. It isn't easy for them to keep their eyes everywhere," said Captain Percival with a half sigh.

"Na," said the Scotch shoe-maker, grimly, "they'll never see it till the meeschief's done. Then they'll make outcry enough, and rin to 'steek the stable door when the

steed's stown.' They'll open their eyes a wee, by and by, when they fin' they've lost this gran' province, just by no takin' tent in time !"

"Davie Watson," returned the yeoman, indignantly, "don't you ever say such a word again. Lose this province, indeed,—while there's many a brave yeoman in it will give his heart's blood sooner than see the Stars and Stripes waving over it ! Yes, sir," he continued, turning to Percival, "its not idle brag with me. I left as fine a farm and homestead as a man would want to see, behind me in the valley of the Connecticut, and came here, nigh thirty years ago now, to fell the trees with my own hands to build a log cabin to bring my wife into, sooner than to part company with the Union Jack ! That was about as hard a thing to do as I'm like to have to do again ; but I'm ready, and my sons are ready, too, sir, to turn out to-morrow and shoulder a musket for the old flag still. And there's hundreds, aye, and thousands, 'll do the same throughout the province ! But, all the same, they might back us up better at home."

Percival's somewhat cold blue eye had lighted up a little at the enthusiasm of the old farmer, and he replied soothingly :—

"So they would, I'm sure, if they realized the danger. You know they have a good deal to think about just now ; but England might well be proud to know what brave, loyal subjects she has over here. I've not a doubt but

they're able to keep the country for her, with what help we regulars can give, even in the event of a sudden attack."

"Ay, may be ; sma' thanks to *her* then, when our gude blood's been spilt to keep it," grumbled Davie.

"Wait till *your* blood's been shed, Davie," remarked the farmer, good-naturedly, but with significance.

"If England only knew her own interest," said the Newark shopkeeper, who had hitherto listened in silence to the conversation, "she'd give a little more thought to her property over here. It's always been the way since she had any on this side the Atlantic. Folks at home wouldn't even take the trouble to see how the land lay, and what should be done. The Boston tea troubles were all of a piece with the rest, and a nice piece of work they made of that. And then, how they've bungled our boundary line for us ! Any one, that looks at the lie of the land on the map even, could tell we should have had Maine, at least, on our side, to say nothing of Detroit and that country. But the Yankees were wide awake, and the folks at home were half asleep—that's about how it was."

"Tak' care, Maister Martin," said Davie with grim satire ; "gin ye gang on at this gait, ye'll be ta'en up for a rebel, and maybe confiscated and sold out while ye're in gaol, like puir Sandy McTavish."

"You're more likely to be taken up yourself, as far as that goes," was the retort.

"Deed, not I ; a puir shoemaker wi' nae gear but my

last and a wheen hides. Na, neither the sheriff nor his understrappers 'll covet anything in Davie Watson's shop," he replied scornfully.

"Then look how we're kept down for want of capital,"—the trader went on, seeming pleased to get his grievances ventilated on one who, for the time being, appeared to represent the delinquent British nation. "If we only had a little of the capital they sink in peppering the French, or even of what they spend among our neighbours over there, helping to enrich our enemies, we could get on, and clear our land, and make roads, and raise such crops as would astonish them. Aye, if they had but taken thought in time, they might have raised enough wheat out here to feed the famishing folk that broke in the windows of the bakers' shops when they found themselves starving; and might have saved themselves the law about brown bread, too."

The discussion was getting too warm for the officer, who did not relish the attacks from which he found it difficult to defend his country, in regard to matters, too, of which he found himself very ignorant. He was glad of an opportunity that presented itself for making a diversion, when the driver, handing him the reins, sprang from his seat in front of a hawthorn in full bloom, and broke off some large boughs, with which he proceeded to decorate the horses' heads.

"What's that for, John?" he inquired.

"For His Majesty's birthday," replied John. "This is the day, you know, and this is the way the horses used to coom into the Red Lion at Ashford; and the Major likes to see it still,—that's Major Meredith, you know. We'll be at 'The Elms' in a jiffy."

"Ah," said Captain Percival, "I thought it was about time we should be getting near there. That's my halting-place for to-night."

"Oh, then, your honour knows him,"—said John, with great interest.

"No, I have never met him," was the reply; "but he's one of my father's oldest friends. My baggage can go on to Newark, all but my valise and that small box, which is Miss Meredith's property. I suppose the Major's pretty sure to be at home?"

"That he is, sir, for this is trainin' day, you know, and the Major's a great hand for keeping the volunteers in drill. The fellows about here 'll stand fire with any in the country. And will your honour be going on with us next trip?" inquired John, unwilling to part company with his military passenger.

"Oh, I shall go on in a day or so; but I hope Hector's foot will be well enough to carry me the rest of the way, and then I shall be independent of wheels."

"All the better for your honour; and when you get to the Major's you won't be leaving it in a hurry. He's mighty glad to see gentlemen of the army, is the Major, as well

he might be, bein', as he was, such a good soldier himself. I served with him, sir, all through the American war, and was his body-servant till I left the army. And when he left it, he bought my discharge and brought me here with him; and many a day I've worked with him at felling the big trees to build his first log-house. And I helped to lay the foundation of the new one, and a real foine house it is as any in these parts. So when I'd served my time out in hard work, and was beginning to want a little rest, he got me this job, as something lighter, though your honour does think it hard work goin' over the stumps. But he 'most always comes to have a word with me when I'm passin'. And Miss Liliass—there isn't the likes of her in these parts, so straight and so slim, just like her mother as died nigh twenty years ago now, and she do allays have a word for her old friend as has carried her round the fields many a day."

"Ah! that's the young lady I'm bringing out the box for, I suppose."

"Yes, there's only one, sir. She's been away at York on a visit, and the Major only brought her home a couple of days ago. She'll be with him at the trainin' to-day, for she allays goes about with him on her gray pony, wherever he goes. There, I hear the bugle now, and like enough we'll be at the Major's by the time he gets home."

It was not long before the stage emerged into a comparatively open country, along the foot of the wooded

ridge that still rose above the road on their right ; while to the left, beyond partially cleared fields, stretched the calm expanse of the lake, sleeping softly, blue as the Mediterranean, in the afternoon light. The curve of the coast could be partially discerned, and the line of the distant horizon melted softly into the dissolving gray and blue cloud tints. The free, wide expanse of water seemed to refresh the tired travellers almost like a glimpse of the sea. After passing two or three clearings, each with its rough log hut and barns, the fields grew noticeably more fertile, and free from the black stumps so obnoxious to an English eye ; and John pointed out with pride "the Major's farm."

"And there's the house ;" he added, indicating the place where a pretty large and substantial stone house was dimly to be seen behind a luxuriant orchard, laden with its pinky bloom. "They call it the 'big house' here-about, for it's a good bit bigger than any in these parts, but the Major calls it 'The Elms.'"

The name did not seem inappropriate, for at the gate leading from the road into the shrubbery in front of the house, two majestic elms, with round massive heads, whose long pendants drooped gracefully almost to the ground, towered like warders over the entrance. Behind them, weeping willows drooped beside maples and acacias, between which a straight walk led up to the open door, with its cool pillared porch festooned with Virginia

Creepers, which spread its clinging arms high over wall and window. A plain square house it was, with windows comparatively small, as was the fashion of those days, but looking home-like and substantial—a place for family life to develop and run smoothly in, from childhood to old age. Behind it, towards the lake, were more bowery orchard trees in bloom, and on the farther side, a luxuriant garden extended its thriving rows of vegetables—interspersed with the substantial old spring flowers, such as columbines, peonies, heart's ease, that are not apt to be ashamed, like the modern summer flowers, to flourish in the company of neighbours more useful than ornamental. A little in the background were the substantial barns and stables, some of them being the original log buildings first put up for that purpose.

As the stage approached the gate, Percival could distinguish two equestrians advancing rapidly from the opposite direction, one of them being apparently a robust elderly gentleman, riding with an upright military air, and the other the slight, graceful figure of a young lady in a dark blue riding habit.

"The Major and his daughter, I suppose?" said he. "The young lady trots well; better than most English girls."

"Aye, that she do! You see, she rides so much with her father that she has learned to ride at his pace, as well as he does himself, and that's saying a good deal! He sees us, and he'll stop till we come up, you'll see, sir."

As he spoke, "the Major" dismounted, opened the gate for his daughter to pass in, and while she cantered round by a side avenue to the stables, her father, leaning against the gate post, waited for the stage to draw up at the gate, to make his usual inquiries concerning the latest news; unaware of the unexpected visitor that the lumbering conveyance was bringing him.

CHAPTER II.

A TETE-A-TETE.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her: for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fall to see,
E'en in the motions of the storm,
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy."

UNDER the flickering shadow of the apple trees that extended from the side to the rear of the "big house," a black boy, with laughing eyes and gleaming white teeth, stood waiting to take "Miss Liliash's" pony. He had surreptitiously left his field work more than an hour before, to hang around in readiness for this important duty.

"Well, Sambo, how has Aunt Judy been getting on since I have been away?" inquired the young lady, as she sprang lightly to the ground.

"Oh, fust rate, Miss Liliash, only for the rheumatiz; and her tea and sugar's been done this while back. She's been takin' on to see you again."

"I intend to go to see her this very afternoon," Miss Liliash replied, as, gathering up her long riding skirt, she

passed on to the wide open house-door, in front of which an old wolf-hound lay stretched, too sleepy to do more than wag his tail in response to his mistress' greeting as she passed him.

Just within the open doorway, an elderly woman sat knitting, dressed in a sort of tartan home-spun, a blue checked apron, a snowy kerchief neatly folded over her shoulders, and a wide-frilled cap as snowy as the kerchief. The keen dark eyes surveyed the young lady through their spectacles, with a half deferential, half protective expression.

"You'll be tired, Miss Liliatiz dear, ridin' about all the afternoon. Just gang awa' noo, and rest yersel' till the tea's ready."

"Oh, I'm not a bit tired, Nannie," replied the clear, fresh young voice, "and I'm going before tea to see poor old Aunt Judy; I know she'll be looking for me every day, now she knows I've come home, and I want to take her the things I brought her from York. I'll be back in good time for tea."

The girl's light figure speedily disappeared round the sharp angle of the steep staircase. Her plain, white-curtained chamber looked towards the back of the house, across the orchard and two or three fields, to the blue lake beyond. If it contained little of modern luxury, it had fresh air, snowy linen, sweet fragrance wafted in at open windows festooned by the waving tendrils of the

Virginia Creeper,—as well as certain of the little tasteful arrangements with which a maiden usually likes to adorn her chamber. The little stiff old-fashioned toilet-table was brightened by some dainty relics of an older world and age :—a little hand-mirror set in ivory, a silver pounce box, a quaintly carved sandal-wood fan, contrasted strangely with the otherwise simple appointments. Above the little mirror, fancifully decorated with peacock's feathers, hung, suspended by a blue ribbon, a small oval miniature, delicately painted on ivory, and as the girl stood before the glass unfastening her riding habit with nimble fingers, the face in the mirror and that on the ivory might have seemed, at a careless glance, the same. There was the same candid, open brow, framed by the same arch of soft, dark chestnut hair; the same clearly-cut, refined features and delicate profile; the same finely-pencilled arched eyebrows, and graceful droop of eyelid, half veiling the same clear, trustful grey eyes, and the same soft curves of lip and chin. But the resemblance was with a difference, if the observer looked more closely. The appearance of excessive delicacy and fragility which characterised the portrait was not nearly to the same extent perceptible in the living face, on which the extreme fairness and faint bloom of the picture were replaced by tints more suggestive of health and freshness; the dark shade beneath the eyes of the pictured face, symptomatic of ill-health or sorrow, was absent from the girl's brighter coun-

tenance, and the latter wore her hair dressed in a much simpler fashion than that of the portrait, which, with its elaborate loops and puffings, belonged to an earlier period. The curves of the mouth, though as sweet, were stronger in the face of the girl, and without the wistful sadness which gave a touch of pathos to the picture, and the lines of the chin of the flesh and blood maiden had an air of strength and resolution about them quite wanting from the painted ivory. Moreover, the rounded figure of the girl—slenderly built though it was—had a firm elasticity about it that could never have belonged to the original of the portrait,—Lilias Meredith's fair young mother,—who, transplanted to a rough and uncongenial atmosphere, had drooped and died some twenty years before,—in the wild Canadian home which had never seemed a home to her. But Lilias, unconscious of privations the reverse of which she had never known, and inheriting a portion of her father's stronger nature, had grown up in her free, open country life, faithfully tended by the old confidential servant who had come with her mother from her Scottish home; and the petted and constant companion of her father, both at home and abroad; blossoming into a womanhood as vigorous in its apparent fragility as the graceful Canadian columbine that bloomed on her native rocks.

It was not long before Lilias, having exchanged her riding habit for a nankeen walking dress and broad-brimmed hat tied with a blue ribbon, had set out with her

small store of luxuries for Aunt Judy, by a little meadow-path that led from the back of the house, and was a comparatively short cut to the old woman's cabin, close by the lake shore. She was not aware, as yet, of the impending visitor, with whom her father, still in the first eager flow of questions and replies, was leisurely sauntering along the road to the inn,—a slight improvement on the last one;—there to have a final word with John Wardle, and treat him to a foaming mug of ale, as a reward for the welcome guest he had brought him. Sambo, meantime, whose quick eye had espied the arrival, was leading the horses up the avenue to the stables, with many a glance of admiration at the graceful proportions and proudly arching neck of the stranger's steed.

The meadow-path which Lilius had taken led her past the rear of the churchyard surrounding the little church of rough stone, which Major Meredith had had erected for occasional sermons and weekly services held in it, but partly, it must be admitted, from a desire thus to consecrate, in the way that seemed to him most appropriate, the ground which contained the precious dust whose memory was still so dear to him. The same unavowed motive had led him to plant the acacias and weeping willows, through whose branches the soft summer breeze sighed over the few soft green mounds that suggested the idea of a deep, quiet, unbroken repose. Lilius loved the place well; it was one of her favourite haunts, with its atmos-

phere of peaceful seclusion, and its outlook across the green meadows to the blue, sleeping lake. She had not been there since her return, and she found herself, almost without knowing it, turning in at the little private gate, and tracing the familiar path that led to the wide flat stone, already somewhat time-worn, which recorded the death of "Lilias Ramsay, the beloved wife of Henry Meredith, Major, &c., &c., who died May 30, 1794."

Lilias sat down upon the broad stone, tracing out the inscription, now becoming a little broken and indistinct, and wiping the dust off it with her handkerchief, as she had done so many and many a time throughout her orphaned childhood, while she vainly tried to fancy how her life would have been altered had the mother whose dust lay below been spared to her. At last she started from her reverie with a sigh, and, glancing wistfully around her at the sweet, confused mingling of sunny verdure and flickering shadow, and distant blue of sky and lake, she prepared to depart, when a movement near her made her turn to see that she was not the only visitor to the churchyard. The other was a young man, very plainly dressed, but with an unmistakeable air of refinement and cultivation about him which would at once have distinguished him from any of the Oakridge rustics, who had for some time been leaning against a tombstone at a little distance, watching the maiden's reverie, which he seemed half impatient, half reluctant to disturb. He now came rapidly

forward, a glad smile of recognition lighting up the expressive dark eyes that formed the most noticeable feature in a face rather thin and care-worn for its youth, and whose general expression was a grave and thoughtful,—almost a sad one.

“Mr. Ernest ! I didn’t know you were at Oakridge !” said Liliás, acknowledging his greeting with a smile almost as bright as his own.

“Having two days’ holiday,” replied the young man, “I couldn’t help coming home ; and hearing that you had come home too, I was on my way to welcome you back, when I turned in here to pay *my* visit too ;” and the smile gave place to the grave expression it had dispelled, as he slightly turned his head toward the small grave-stone beside which he had been standing.

“Yes ! home would hardly seem home without this spot,”—replied Liliás, in a subdued tone.

“Strange ! that there seems to be so much where there is so little ;—when one knows that they are not *there* at all ;—when there is no response, however one may want help or sympathy ;” said the young man with a weary, despondent air, in striking contrast with the animation he had shown a few moments before.

“Yes ! only we know there is always help and sympathy from where they are !” replied the girl, reverently, yet half shyly. “But you seem tired. Did you walk over?”

“Yes, of course ; but that needn’t have knocked me

up. I'm a tolerably good walker, you know, and I broke the journey;—did half last evening and half this morning. I started before the boys had got done hurraing for their holiday. It made me envy them, and look back with a sort of regret to the time when I should have hurraed too for such a cause !”

“As if you were not really happier now, with so much more capacity for enjoying, and so many far higher things to enjoy !”

“Well, those two things may be granted, and yet the happiness not follow. But I suppose I *am* a little fagged. Teaching is a wearing thing after one has had a good while of it, and I feel worried, often, that I can't go on with my own studies as I should like. But I hope you have been happy, and have enjoyed your visit ! You are looking well ;”—and the smile again chased away the gravity.

“Yes, I had a very pleasant visit, on the whole, except for the York mud, which is frightful ; and it isn't nearly as nice a place, take it all in all, as dear old Oakridge ; though they laugh at us there as ‘backwoods.’ But every one was very kind, from General Brock downwards. Oh ! *he* is splendid, I think ; only of course he was away a good deal of the time. I suppose you often see him at Newark.”

“Yes, his tall figure is pretty familiar there, riding about on his gray charger. A splendid rider he is too ; and a fine soldierly-looking man. The Newark people respect and love him thoroughly.”

"So does every one, I think," replied Lilius, warmly. "You should hear Marjorie McLeod talk about him ; she almost worships him, I think ! Your old Greek heroes are nothing to him, according to her."

"Well, very likely she's right there," said the young man, smiling. "I don't see why, in this advanced age of the world, and with Christianity to help, we shouldn't have better heroes than those old Pagan fellows, even Leonidas and Aristides included ; and I think any one who can appreciate a living hero, without being told he is one, deserves credit."

"I'll tell Marjorie when I see her. She'll be glad to know that you admit his claim to be a hero, for she thinks you a good judge."

"Does she? I'm afraid she's mistaken,"—and the weary intonation returned. "Which way were you going, and may I go with you?" he asked, very deferentially.

"I shall be very glad if you will. I was going to see Aunt Judy, and bring her some little things from York. No, you needn't take them ; I'm not half so tired as you are, though I have been riding with papa most of the day;" she remonstrated, as the young man took the basket from her, respectfully but determinedly.

"Yes, and how did the training go off? All the better for *your* presence, I am sure," said he, as they walked slowly onward.

"I don't know. I suspect *that* didn't make much

difference. Some of the new ones were awkward enough, poor fellows ; but some of them do splendidly, almost as good as regulars, my father says. He is quite proud of his volunteers, and I really believe he is longing to lead them into action."

"I earnestly trust there may be no need for it," was the grave reply. "What a terrible unnatural evil such a war would be !"

"Do you think it is likely then ?" asked Lillas, an uneasy fear vibrating through her clear voice. "I know my father does, but I have been hoping it is only his military zeal that makes him think so."

"I fear there is only too much likelihood. I know the American feeling is very strong, and there is just, yes *just* as bitter a feeling here against *them*! When political feelings gain the mastery, it is strange how they deaden every sympathy and generous feeling. Many that are naturally kind-hearted seem, when national antagonism comes into play, to become hardened into wild beasts. If we do have fighting, it will be fierce."

"Well, but your friends, the Americans, have no right whatever to molest us, who are not molesting them. If there is fighting it will be their fault, not ours,"—said Lillas, with some energy.

Most unquestionably. Even national grievances—and I think they have some to complain of—could not excuse their bringing the horrors of war on a peaceful, unoffending province."

"Then you won't join them in the raid against Oakridge?"—said the girl, with a little arch mischief in her inquiring glance, of which she repented when she saw the look of pain in the young man's face.

"I should think you need hardly ask *that*, Miss Lilius," he replied, with a painful, suppressed energy. "If they do invade, I could not hesitate about my duty, hard as it would be to find myself in arms against the country my dear father almost died fighting for. But I hope, against hope I sometimes fear,—that I may not be driven into so painful a position."

"Then you would join the volunteers in case of war?" said Lilius, a shade of satisfaction perceptible in her voice, subdued as it was by the evident pain with which the other spoke. "I half thought you might wish to remain neutral."

"Yes, I have thought the question over and over in many a sleepless night these past months, and I don't see that in such a case, and much as I dislike war in principle, neutrality would be either practicable or desirable. And in case of an invasion, I feel that it would be the duty of every man who can, to use every means of repelling it. So I have been training a little, as I could spare the time, with the Newark volunteers, and though some of them were jealous of me at first, as a 'Yankee,' and a man who couldn't know anything about military matters, they are beginning to have a little respect for my soldiering qualities now."

"I don't wonder you're feeling fagged and worn out, then, with all that amount of work on your hands," said Liliás, rather trying to repress the evident satisfaction with which she had heard the last piece of intelligence. She could not help being, as she was, thoroughly a soldier's daughter, and a respect for military prowess, above most other kinds, was, in spite of her own strong inward reasonings to the contrary, blended with her very life-blood. It awakened other thoughts, too—thoughts of possibilities and contingencies that might arise out of what seemed so strangely unreal and impossible, and yet so thrillingly, nearly probable. Perhaps Ernest Heathcote also was thinking of possible contingencies. Silently and thoughtfully the two walked on through the piece of "maple bush" through which their path led, the slanting sunbeams that quivered through the leaves making an arabesque pattern on the brown ground below, and the soft tinkling of cow-bells in the neighbouring pastures sounding like a musical accompaniment to the pastoral stillness, till they came out upon the bit of clearing where stood Aunt Judy's tiny log cabin, close to the lake.

It was just where the shore curved round in a sandy bay, and the blue of the water changed into a peculiar pale green, as the waves, now slightly ruffled by a breeze, plashed lightly up on the silvery sand. The little bay was framed in on both sides by deep green woods, forming a back-ground to the cabin standing in the midst of its bit of

rudely-fenced garden. Far out to the horizon line stretched the expanse of blue water, broken only by the white sails of a distant schooner. Familiar as the view was to both Liliás and her companion, they paused for a few moments to enjoy the sense of combined freedom and repose which it suggested, before they passed around to the front of the cottage, where old Judy sat on her door-step, busy mending for her grandson Sambo, and crooning a quaint hymn as she worked. The wrinkled brown face, crowned with the woolly white hair that peeped out from under a whiter cap, was bent down, intent on her work, but at the sound of approaching steps she raised it, and her bright old eyes beamed out the kindest of welcomes, as, with a reposeful dignity of manner, and soft, low-toned voice which many a would-be fine lady might have envied, she came forward to greet "Miss Liliás."

"And so de Lord hab brought ye safe home, honey. Well, He's good to His poor chil'en—dat's certain—for all we do forget Him so much! And ye're looking well too, and as bright as a May posy. My old eyes has been longin' to see you dis many a long day! An' Mr. Ernest, I'm glad to see you too; but I can't say as *you're* lookin' so well."

"Mr. Ernest has been tiring himself out, Judy, between teaching and studying and drilling," said Liliás.

"Jes' so," the old woman replied, shaking her head; "dat's de way wid you young folks! Runnin' right t'rough de strength de good Lord gave, and meant to last

de tree score years and ten! You mind dat, Massa Ernest, or you'll never see my age. But 'bout dis drillin', Miss Liliass," she added, anxiously, "does yer really tink dem Yankees gwine to come over to dis yere country? Some folks been frightened Sambo so, he come home a-cryin' t'oder evenin'—tellin' him dey'd be over, and he'd be took up and sold down South for a slave."

"That's all nonsense, Aunt Judy," replied Liliass, half smiling, "and it was very wicked and mischievous in any one who told poor Sambo so; but still my father thinks there may be fighting, and it's best to be ready, you know, in case. But if they do come over, you may be sure they'll be sent home again without either you or Sambo," she continued reassuringly.

"Well, I aint much 'feard for myself, nor hadn't ought to be for Sambo neither, seein' I know who's taken care of dis yere poor creetur all her life long. An' it's He that'll keep us all, honey, or de watchmen 'll watch in vain."

"Right enough," said Ernest Heathcote, gravely, "only the watchmen must do their part too. They won't deserve to be kept if they are lazy and careless, and go to sleep at their posts. And I mean, for one, to keep awake."

Judy's reflections were, however, put to flight for the time by the presentation of Miss Liliass' thoughtful gifts,—the tea and sugar and other small luxuries so needful for the poor old woman's comfort, and yet so costly and so scarce in the remote wilds of Oakridge. It was not easy

to get away from her gratitude, and her eager questions as to all Miss Liliás had been seeing and doing during her absence; but at last Liliás broke away, fearing lest she should be keeping her father waiting for the tea-dinner which formed his most substantial meal.

"What an all-absorbing topic this idea of a war is getting to be," remarked Liliás to her companion as they retraced their steps. "I am afraid we are going to have it, if it be true that 'coming events cast their shadows before,' as that poem you read to me, last time you were here, says. I mean the last time you were here before I went away; for I suppose you've been here several times since then?"

"Only once," he replied gravely. "But your speaking of the poem reminds me of something I have here that I hope you will like,—a poem by Walter Scott, which I had heard of, but not seen before."

And he drew from his pocket a thin blue paper-covered book, on the back of which, on a white label, was printed "Marmion," and placed it in Liliás' eager hands.

"How did you get hold of it?" she asked.

"It was in my friend Martin's little stock of books. I don't know how he happened to light upon it, but I'm sure he was glad to get rid of it, for I don't think he had much hope of selling it in Newark. The officers don't patronize literature much, as a rule. I was very glad to get hold of this, for I had seen a very sharp criticism of it in a stray

number of the *Edinburgh Review* that came in any way, so I felt the more interested in it. But it seems to me the reviewer is in the wrong box for once, for I think it's a magnificent poem, if ever there was one! Do just listen to the splendid ring of the measure."

And taking the book, he read, with a clear, forcible intonation and genuine enthusiasm, the well-known opening lines :

"Day set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep," etc.

and Liliás, who always delighted in Ernest Heathcote's reading, drank in, with kindling eye and flushing cheek, the great magician's gorgeous picture, whose scenery and colouring were so different from anything her native land could show.

"It is beautiful!" she exclaimed, with a little sigh, as he concluded. "I am sure it will be a great pleasure to read it. And may I let Marjorie McLeod read it? I know she would enjoy it."

"I hope you will do me the pleasure of accepting it," he replied. "I meant it for you to keep, if you liked it."

"Oh, thank you," said Liliás; "it is very kind of you, but I almost feel as if it were robbing you,—you love books so!"

"Not more than I do my friends, I hope," he replied, smiling; and then the grave look came instantly back, and he walked silently on; while Liliás, glancing at the

poem here and there, tried to shake off a certain sense of embarrassment which the gift had brought, and which she, in her free, simple life, had not often felt.

"And how are they all at the farm?" she said at last. "What a shame for me not to have asked before."

"All well. Uncle Jacob and Aunt Patience have been at Burlington Bay, but were expected home this afternoon. Rachel and the boys are as usual."

"And Rachel is as pretty as ever, I suppose?"

"Prettier! I think I never saw her so fresh and blooming—just like a rosebud beginning to blow! Perhaps it would be better for her if she were not so pretty;" he added, thoughtfully.

"Why?"

"Oh,—well, I don't know if it really is of as much consequence as I have been making it; but I thought I would tell you, and perhaps when you see her you might give her a caution. I wouldn't like to vex Aunt Patience about it; but there's a young officer from Newark who has been round here several times, and he's managed to see Rachel alone, and I'm afraid he's put a little nonsense into her head. How he knew my uncle and aunt were away, I don't know; but this forenoon, when I walked in, he was there,—was hot and tired, he said, and came in, as he passed, to get a glass of milk. And Rachel, poor girl, was blushing so prettily, and looking so pleased at the fine speeches I found he had been making to her,

that I could hardly find it in my heart to tell her not to listen to him or believe him ; for, of course, he was only amusing himself with her."

"What is his name?" asked Liliás.

"Payne—of the 41st. He's a weak, frivolous, brainless sort of fellow, and in Newark his companions are not very creditable, and I know he's mixed up with a gambling set."

"Oh, I have seen him once or twice with some of the other officers," said Liliás, "but I know my father doesn't like him, and never asks him to his house. How did he get to know Rachel?"

"Indeed I am puzzled to know how, unless it is through a fellow that used to be here, and is in Newark now,—Bill Davis ; do you remember him?"

"Oh, yes ! I shouldn't be likely to forget how he used to rob our trees of the best apples, and how angry he used to make my father."

"Well, he's living in Newark now,—*how*, no one can tell, but I suspect it is in ways that won't bear looking into. At any rate he's a good deal mixed up with Payne's set of gambling, betting fellows, and I suspect he must have told Payne about Rachel, perhaps out of a spite he has at me. He once professed to admire Rachel himself, and because she wouldn't have anything to say to him, he thought I had set her against him, and seemed to believe it was on my own account ; so I suppose he thought he

would at once annoy me and propitiate Payne by showing him a pretty girl to flirt with."

"What a wicked young man he must be!" exclaimed Liliás, shocked at what was to her so new a development of character.

"Indeed, I am sorry to say he is not a singular instance. You don't know how happy you are, Miss Liliás, to be so shut out from the knowledge of the wickedness of the world as you are here. It makes one ashamed sometimes of one's very manhood," he said with almost a bitter earnestness, "when one sees the things that go on and are tolerated by people who ought to know better! But it isn't a pleasant subject for a lovely afternoon like this, is it?—the knowledge of good and evil! A precious boon, certainly, for a tempter to bring to Eden!"

"I always *did* wonder at that," said Liliás, thoughtfully.

"It was the very ignorance of the evil that made the temptation, I suppose. If we didn't know what evil meant, we don't know how far curiosity might carry us. But I am really concerned about poor Rachel," he added, in a softened tone; "and if you could caution her when you see her, I wish you would! She is so young and simple; and that fellow is good-looking and insinuating enough to make him dangerous. I shouldn't like to see her break her heart about him."

"I will try, if I can get an opportunity," replied Liliás,

in a low tone. Somehow the request and the subject made her feel uncomfortable. It was natural enough for Ernest to be concerned about the happiness of his little cousin, brought up by his side ; but yet his anxiety rather troubled her, and she did not find it easy to talk with him on such a subject. She would have smiled, even to herself, at the idea of anything more than friendship existing between herself and Ernest Heathcote, yet there was an underlying sensitiveness that made itself felt whenever its province was encroached upon ; and the same sensitiveness perhaps was not without effect, by sympathy, on her companion. Both, at all events, finished the walk in a more abstracted mood than they had begun it, although they still talked on,—Lilias describing some of her York experiences, and Ernest talking of the studies and books which had been occupying his mind,—usually an interesting subject to his fair companion.

“You will come in to tea?” Lilias said, as they came under the shade of the wide-spreading elms. “My father will be glad to have a talk with you about Lord Wellington and the Spanish campaign. You know I’m not so good a geographer as you,” she added smiling,—“so I don’t understand it half so well.”

“Thank you,” he replied, half hesitatingly, “I should like it very much ; and perhaps after tea you would like a French reading? You know we left *Athalie* in trouble last time.”

"As she deserved to be! But who can that be with my father?" she exclaimed, as they came in sight of the front portico, where Major Meredith sat smoking his pipe, in company with a stranger, an English officer evidently, who, Ernest could see at a glance, was tall, handsome, and gifted with the additional indefinite grace of culture and high breeding.

Major Meredith came eagerly forward to meet his daughter, and after a courteous but rather patronising greeting to "Mr. Ernest," he said in a low tone—

"Lilias, my dear, we have got an unexpected visitor—Captain Percival, my old comrade Percival's son—just arrived from home! I have been waiting for you to come in and be introduced to him; and you must order tea at once, for we are very hungry."

Captain Percival had risen, and was looking with some evident surprise at Lilias, as he awaited her approach and the introduction. Ernest detained her for a moment to say very respectfully—

"If you will excuse me, Miss Lilias, I'll not stay this evening. I'll see you again before I go."

And, before she could object, he bowed and departed, disappearing quickly among the shadows of the avenue, while Major Meredith, inwardly applauding the propriety of the young man's action, led his daughter forward, with evident pride at being able to present to the stranger so fair and graceful a maiden as—"My daughter, sir."

CHAPTER III.

A RETROSPECT AND A MEDITATION.

"On every mountain crest
Is rest,—
On every vale beneath,
No breath
Disturbs the quietude ;
The little birds are silent in the wood :
Soon, patient, weary breast,
Thou too wilt rest !"

IT was with a strong rising pain at his heart, stronger than he could have reasonably accounted for even to himself, that Ernest Heathcote hurried away from the house where, a few moments before, he had expected to spend some happy hours in a companionship the exceeding sweetness of which, to him, he had only of late begun openly to acknowledge to himself. But it was not only the disappointment of the immediate deprivation that made his heart sink so low. A vague, haunting fear for the future, which had been dimly oppressing him, had seemed suddenly to take a definite form from the unexpected appearance of this stranger. Slight as the circumstance was, it seemed to chime in only too well with the train of thought which had been occupying his mind before. He

walked rapidly on, fighting off thought by dint of exercise ; and instead of pursuing his way to the " Lake Farm,"—his Oakridge home,—he turned aside towards the hilly ridge which skirted the little settlement at a short distance from the lake, and which, being well wooded with oak and other trees, gave it its name. It was rather a steep clamber up the rocky, wooded side, but the climbing helped to take the edge off the inward pain ; and when he at last reached the open knoll near the summit, toward which he had been directing his steps, and threw himself down to rest and think, his mood had become considerably tranquillized.

It was a lovely summer panorama that lay spread out before him. The wide expanse of lake, as softly blue as a sleeping southern sea ; the green curving shore that swept from Burlington Bay, on the one hand, round almost in a semicircle to the Newark district on the other ; the heavy masses of forest, in the distance dimly blue against the horizon—near at hand showing such a variety of vivid green, interspersed with the paler hues of occasional clearings ; here and there a faint curl of smoke from the chimney of a settler's cabin, denoting preparations for the evening meal ; just below, the little grey church and churchyard ; and, a little to the left, behind the gracefully towering elms, among the apple and peach trees, the creeper-covered walls of the " big house" to which his eye turned so wistfully. The tide of thought swept in now in

full force, and the familiar features of the scene before him seemed to weave themselves inextricably into the mazes of the reverie, half retrospective, half anticipative, that took possession of him. But, to understand the tenor of his meditations, it is necessary to glance briefly at his past history.

His father had been an officer in the revolutionary army, and had gained his captaincy by gallant services during the war of Independence. A year or two before its close he had impulsively married a gentle Quaker maiden, growing up in a New England farm-house where he had been nursed through a fever following upon wounds and exposure after an engagement. Her family strongly opposed the marriage, the more so that they were opposed to the war in principle, and that the other daughter was about to be married to Jacob Thurstane, a keen and sturdy Loyalist. But the young officer's ardour and the maiden's affection overcame all the opposition, reasonable and unreasonable, of the simple, kindly country folk, and the marriage took place, the young husband being obliged, shortly after, to leave his bride with her parents, while he again went to risk his life in the cause into which he had thrown himself, heart and soul. It was a sorrowful, anxious time for the young wife, whose sympathies naturally went with the side on which her husband's life was staked, while those of her own family, and, more strongly still, those of her new brother-in-law,

were entirely on the other. At last the contest was decided. Captain Heathcote returned to his wife,—his life spared, indeed, but with the seeds of disease in his constitution, which were to bring him to a premature grave ;—and Jacob Thurstane, determined to cling to the British flag, left his well-tilled, flourishing farm, and took refuge in Canada as a United Empire Loyalist. Captain Heathcote and his wife lived on for some years with the old father and mother in the quiet little homestead, where one sorrow rapidly followed another. Children were born only to pine away and die, while their lives were reckoned by months ;—the old father and mother ere long followed the little grandchildren ; and then Captain Heathcote's lingering malady, aggravated by cold and exposure, developed itself so rapidly that, almost before his wife could bring herself to admit his danger, she found herself a widow,—alone in the world but for the one infant of a few months old, who, unlike its predecessors, seemed likely to be spared to her. Tidings did not travel rapidly from Massachusetts to Canada in those days, but when Jacob and Patience Thurstane received the sorrowful, painfully written letter which told them of Rachel Heathcote's desolation, the strong, gentle-hearted yeoman set out at once to bring her and her baby to his Canadian home.

"It's rough enough yet, sister Rachel," said Patience, as the two sisters wept together when Mrs. Heathcote arrived ; "but if thee can like it after the dear old home,

we'll try to make thee as happy as thee can ever be in this world now, poor soul!"

They kept their word, and the Lake Farm was at least a peaceful home for poor Rachel Heathcote for the few years that her life, worn down by sorrow, was prolonged. And when she quietly departed to her real home, where broken bonds are united and broken hearts made whole, it was without the shadow of an anxiety for the future of the son whom she confidently entrusted to her brother and sister's faithful guardianship. That trust had not been disappointed. Jacob and Patience Thurstane would have been unkind to their own children sooner than to their orphaned nephew; and the former, seeing that the boy was not nearly so strong as his own vigorous sons, but that he "favoured book-learning," was anxious to secure for him as good an education as was possible in those days. As the settlement grew, a teacher now and then came to Oakridge for the winter months, and Ernest rapidly learned all that such not very thoroughly equipped instructors could teach him. Major Meredith, to whom steady, honest Jacob Thurstane had always been a trusty friend and ally, pleased with the boy's evident ability and love of study, presented him with a Latin grammar and *Delectus*, in which he made such progress that, by Major Meredith's advice, he was sent for a winter to the Grammar School sometimes in operation at Newark, and subsequently to Harvard College. This event was of no

small importance in the boy's life, since it not only wonderfully enlarged his range of ideas and experience, and stimulated his fast developing powers, but it also introduced him to the country of his parents, and to scenes full of interest to him from the reminiscences which, boy as he was, he had treasured up, from his mother's lips, of his father's campaigns. On his final return from college, being still undecided as to his future career, he had, by the advice of both his uncle and Major Meredith, undertaken to discharge the duties of grammar-school teacher at Newark, while he continued eagerly to prosecute his own cherished studies.

At "The Elms" Ernest Heathcote had always been a privileged visitor. The Major had always liked to encourage the clever, studious lad, who, he hoped, would one day turn out a credit to his patronage. His early lost wife, too, had taken a special interest in the young widow, who was fading away very much as she herself was; and after Mrs. Heathcote's death, which happened shortly before her own, she had felt an intense sympathetic compassion for the poor boy left motherless, as she knew her own infant child would be ere long. This association with a beloved memory still fresh in the Major's inmost heart, strengthened the interest he would, in any case, have felt in a promising boy growing up under his immediate observation.

Little Lilius, as she grew up, became the poetry, and

in no small measure the inspiration, of Ernest's quiet, thoughtful life. He was accustomed to see her often and familiarly, but he never forgot, as the sturdier Thurstane boys sometimes did, the respect due to her higher social position, but especially to her sex. Indeed, he was always, with a natural chivalry, as deferential to her as ever was knight to his liege lady. When Liliás rode over to the farm on her pony by her father's side, as she often did, and spent the hours, (while Major Meredith discussed stock and road-making and improvements with the farmer), in wandering about the farm, where she had the child-like conviction that everything—from cows and sheep down to cream and home-made buns and "Johnny-cake,"—was better than they had at home, Ernest was her ready and delighted escort. He it was who went with her to the shore, to watch the waves, white-crested in the breeze, come curling over the sand;—who made her tiny birch-bark canoes, and enclosed a fairy pond with stones, on whose unruffled expanse the tiny craft, with beetles and lady-bugs for crew, might float in safety;—who taught her, with infinite pains, how to make the little flat stones "skip" over the glassy waves, and, in the season of the "dropping nuts," gathered stores of hickory and butternuts for her special delectation. And then, when tired with more active pleasures, Liliás liked nothing better than to sit under a spreading maple or butternut tree, while Ernest told her wonderful stories out of his

Ovid, about Deucalion and Pyrrha, and men sprung from dragons' teeth, and maidens changed into trees, and Pyramus and Thisbe, and poor Ceyx and Halcyone, from which latter he would translate whole pages, to which the child would listen with dilating, dreamy eyes, gazing at the sparkling waves before her, and imagining them the very ones which engulfed the absent, watched-for husband. These stories, laden with the poetic breath of the old heroic ages, and the strange distant lands, nourished the child's imaginative faculty, and widened a mental horizon that might otherwise have been comparatively narrow; and were—hardly less than the Bible stories that Aunt Judy used to tell her in her quaint, confused way,—a vivid reality in her inner world. And she, on the other hand, was to Ernest a softening, refining influence, and to some extent an embodiment of the ideal beauty which vaguely floated before his imagination. In some indefinite fashion she always blended with his dreams of the future, though he would have felt it a profanation to let those dreams take a tangible shape, as with a less sensitive lad they might have done.

When, after each absence from home, he met Lillas, who had herself been sent away for a year to a Montreal boarding-school—a great piece of self-denial on her father's part,—and recognized her increasing beauty and the grace which enlarged social intercourse had added to her naturally frank and simple manner, he was more than ever vividly

conscious both of the difference in their social position and of the delight which he found in her society,—in her very presence. Opportunities for enjoying it were so numerous, and so easy, too, in his vacations spent at the farm. The Major had a tolerably good library for the time and place, chiefly stocked with standard old-time histories—Gibbon, Robertson, Hume, &c.; and as Ernest was free to borrow and read as many as he pleased,—and they formed the staple of his reading in a place where books were otherwise so difficult of access,—they furnished sufficient cause for many a pleasant visit to The Elms. There was many a pleasant talk, also, during these often prolonged visits; for Lilius, stimulated by Ernest's example, generally read the books that he read, and they both found that comparing notes and opinions about them was a great deal pleasanter than enjoying them alone. The Major himself liked to join in some of these talks—they recalled old days when he had been a greater reader than he was now, and he liked to discuss the old English campaigns and victories, comparing past times with present, especially when he could do so with one so well able to form and intelligibly defend an opinion as Ernest Heathcote.

Then Lilius and he compared their respective acquisitions in French, in which Ernest had been his own instructor; and as they found that, while Ernest was incomparably the better versed in the grammar and theory of

the language, Liliás had acquired from her French instructress at school an acquaintance with its pronunciation to which Ernest could not pretend, they often read it together for mutual improvement during the pleasant evenings that Ernest spent at The Elms ; and it was surprising how much life and interest seemed to be infused into the pages of Corneille and Racine on these occasions, and how much better Liliás could appreciate the beauty of the dramas when aided by the thoughtful critical comments of Ernest's maturer mind.

It would have been almost impossible for any young man, in such circumstances, and with Ernest's ardent temperament, to have gone on enjoying a companionship that was constantly becoming dearer to him, without cherishing some fair visions of what might be, if—— ! Had not far greater social differences been bridged by a true and persevering love, winning, by its own determination, such a position as it would not be derogatory to the beloved one to share ? Such dreams would rise, to be constantly checked by the feeling that Liliás, frankly glad as he knew she was to have him for a companion and friend, never looked beyond the pleasure of the present intercourse. Her mind had never been imbued with such sentimental ideas as most young ladies derive from novels, few of these having ever penetrated to Oakridge ; and Corneille and Racine were too much above the level of ordinary life to suggest them. Then her life was such a healthy, happy

one,—so full of the innocent interests which had sufficed to it from her girlhood, that, if entire separation from Ernest would have made any deeply felt blank in it, she was as yet quite unconscious of the fact. And the Major, kind as he always had been to Ernest, genuinely pleased as he always was with his industry and success, was yet, as the latter well knew, so staunchly entrenched in his old Tory ideas of *caste* that he would as soon have expected one of Jacob Thurstane's rough farmer sons to dream of marrying his daughter, as the "lad" whom he looked upon as a sort of *protégé*; even though,—perhaps all the more because,—his father had been one of those Republican soldiers whom Major Meredith had never quite forgiven for "beating the English."

Moreover, Ernest was feeling discouraged, of late, about the realization of the strong hope he had always entertained of winning an important and useful position ;—one wherein the talents of which he was conscious should have more scope than in the cramping drudgery of a schoolmaster's work ; the depressing monotony of which, among very rough and unpromising materials, was telling sensibly upon his strength and energies. He was feeling, even in his private studies, the want of a more definite aim to stimulate him to a more direct and vigorous course through the tempting fields of knowledge. But that definite aim it was not easy to fix. For the study of medicine he had no natural taste or aptitude. Law, with its dry

technicalities, repelled him. The Church, although the preparatory studies would have chimed in far better with his mental tendencies, Ernest Heathcote was too conscientious to enter without a more vividly realizing grasp of the great realities he should have to preach than he was conscious of as yet. With earnest longings after truth of all kinds, and for communion with the unseen source of truth, his heart had not yet found its centre ; he knew he lacked the earnest whole-souled faith which he saw in his aunt, Lillias and poor Aunt Judy, and he felt too strongly the sacred responsibilities of the ministry to enter upon it as a mere profession. To equip himself for a professorship, or the calling of a *littérateur*, would have been, in the state of Canada at that time, a Utopian idea. There was nothing for him, in the present, but to go on in the work, monotonous as it was, which had come to his hand ; and to hope that, by-and-by, the higher and more congenial vocation which at present floated somewhat vaguely before his inward sight might take shape and tangible reality.

Meantime the depressing influences of uncertainty and hope deferred were aggravated by the conflicting emotions which had been awakened by the hostility and antagonism daily increasing between Canada and the United States. Notwithstanding his New England birth, he was as thoroughly Canadian in feeling as his uncle Jacob. To Canada belonged all his early memories and associations,—all the silent influences of solemn forest and changeful lake

and quiet dewy country fields, which had interwoven themselves with his impressible nature, and had as much to do with developing his mind and character as his eagerly studied books. All his fair youthful dreams were linked with Canada as firmly as with Lilies, and Lilies herself was an additional and a strong link in the invisible chain. For Britain, the country from which all his ancestors had originally come—the land of so many heroic traditions—the present upholder of continental liberty against tyrannical encroachments, he felt as strong and loyal an affection as Major Meredith or Jacob Thurstane. But then, the young country which, like a restless, adventurous youth, had thrown aside the paternal yoke, and somewhat roughly vindicated its independence, had a place in his heart, too, and he could not regard it, as the Major and his uncle did,—as an insolent upstart, rearing its independence on gratuitous disloyalty and unreasonable rebellion. He knew well, from his mother's lips, as well as from her expressive silence, how sacred to his father's heart had been the cause of independence, which for him had been the cause of loyalty ; and, stimulated by the filial desire to find justification for his father's course, he had studied with keen attention all he had been able to learn from books or men as to the origin of the struggle. He had heard, from the lips of those who still vividly remembered those days of storm and bitterness, of the oppressions and exactions and high-handed acts which, devised by unwise

counsellors, so far from and so ignorant of the real condition of the country they were undertaking to rule, had made the old British blood of the colonists boil under the sense of hopeless injustice, and roused true-hearted men to rear the standard of defiance. Ernest felt that, had he been one of them, he must have done as they did—that they were actuated by a true loyalty, not to the then Government of England, but to the traditions which had made her the nation she was,—to the spirit which had vindicated her liberty and freed her from kingly tyranny on the field of Naseby. And so, when Major Meredith, who had gained his promotion in the War of Independence, would unsparingly denounce those “recreant Yankees” as traitorous rebels, Ernest, who knew better than to excite his ire by useless argument, was obliged, at least by silence, to show dissent,—a circumstance not unnoticed by the staunch old soldier, who would inwardly regret that his young friend had sprung from so doubtful a stock. For “blood will tell,” he would say to himself; and Ernest was often painfully aware that his genuine and thorough loyalty was secretly doubted by the Major, as well as by other people.

He was, in truth, in a position especially liable to suffer unjust suspicion and misconstruction;—that of one who cannot give unqualified sympathy to either side alone,—who sees too much of the faults of both to be a thorough partisan of either, and who, consequently, meets the dis-

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approval of both. For, while the unscrupulously aggressive spirit of a portion of the American people towards Canada awakened his indignation, he well knew that it was equally distasteful to the better portion of that people themselves ;—that, in his father's New England especially, there were many who denounced the idea as strenuously as any Canadian could do. And he knew, too,—for his intercourse with his American kindred had enabled him to look at matters from their point of view also,—that Britain was not wholly clear of offence on her own part ; that some cause had been given for the animosities that rankled so bitterly in American hearts ; and that corresponding animosities, as bitter, and often as unjust, in many cases predisposed Canadians to unreasonable hostility on their side. He had seen enough of unfairness and violent prejudices, on both sides of the line, to make him thoroughly weary of the quarrel, and, at the same time, to give him good cause to fear that a fierce collision must ere long take place. If so, then he should have no difficulty as to his own course. As he had said to Liliast, he felt that a reckless, unscrupulous invasion of a peaceful country, brought about by base men for selfish ends, must be resisted to the death by every honest man. To take up arms in such a cause was to fight not only for King and Country, but for peace and good order,—for the sacred rights of man,—for home and the dear helpless ones around the hearthstone ; and against murder, rapine, crime,—all the

countless villanies that must attend the success of reckless marauders. Even Aunt Patience forgot her Quaker principles, and ceased to preach peace, when her sons, and even her loyal old husband, shouldered their hunting rifles and went to drill. And Ernest, impressed with the need of being prepared for the worst, and aware that enthusiasm and determination, however strong, would not make up for the lack of previous training, had joined a Newark company of volunteers, and had devoted himself to drilling with an ardour that told considerably upon his not very vigorous strength.

It was not surprising, therefore, that in his present somewhat morbid state, even the society of Liliás should have failed to rouse him out of the painful thoughts that had been harassing him, and that the appearance of this stranger at the very moment when he had been inwardly chafing at the invisible barriers between Liliás and himself, should have given him a stab-like sensation, like the sudden, vivid realisation of a vague misgiving. He had always feared lest the prize he so coveted might be carried off before he could even make an effort to secure it ; for to make any such attempt in present circumstances would, he felt, be an ungrateful breach of trust towards the Major, which would assuredly excite his indignation, even if it succeeded so far as Liliás' own feeling was concerned. He had an exaggerated sense of his own deficiencies of manner and appearance, as compared with Liliás herself, and of

many with whom she would, now especially, be brought into contact. He felt, too, as if no man capable of appreciating Lilius, and free to win her, could help being inspired with the same desire which filled his own heart. But his hold upon her regard was, he thought, painfully slight, sincere as he knew her friendship to be. He was but one pleasant element in a life that had a thousand other interests. And now, in this prepossessing stranger, who would meet her on the familiar footing of an old family friendship, and who was received with such favor by her father, he felt as if he had seen the rival decreed by fate to win the object of his own long-cherished hopes. He knew how slender was the foundation on which this idea had started up, but he could not reason himself out of it. It was one of those sudden, almost unaccountable feelings that sometimes take possession of the mind with tyrant force, and maintain their sway in spite of will and reason.

Well! it would be more in accordance with the fitness of things,—he could not but confess to himself,—than his own dream would be, could it be realised. Was it not selfish to wish to keep Lilius in this remote wilderness, shut out from the world she was so fitted to grace,—from a career that would bring her into a more vivid life and varied experience, side by side with one whom most people would pronounce a far more fitting mate? And yet, would his darling be really happier than he could

make her,—in a tranquil, peaceful life of sympathetic aims? Would any man devote himself more truly—nay, as truly—to secure a happiness so precious to him, and to which he believed he knew so well how to minister, having watched every taste and preference from her childhood? It was a harassing conflict of thought and feeling, and he began to see how fruitless it all was. What could he do, after all, but leave events to take their course—nay, rather leave them to the direction of Him who, as Aunt Judy had said, must “keep the city, or the watchmen would watch in vain?” And as he looked up to the pure ethereal sky above him, now taking the soft rich tones of sunset, he tried to raise his heart, too, to that all-directing, invisible power whose essence is Love, and the thought of Whom, really believed in, must calm the most troubled heart.

His, at least, began to grow quieter, while he sat still on the rocky knoll, watching the sunset, till the soft flood of amber light in the west, melting above into the most delicate green, and the light wreaths of rosy clouds floating above, were all that were left of it; while the placid lake below lay suffused with an exquisite blending of hazy purple and amber and rose. The rich verdure of early summer and the outlines of the fair landscape were all subdued and idealised in the soft evening light. Connecting the scene before him with the thoughts that had been passing through his mind, Ernest mused regretfully on the sad perversity of selfish, passionate human nature, in

bringing in elements of destruction and suffering to mar the divinely given beauty of the fair world. Should the threatened war take place, some such sweet sylvan scene as this would ere long be profaned by the horrid din of arms and deadly human conflict, suffering and mutilation, the "noise of the warrior and the garment rolled in blood." And yet, it would only be adding one page more to the many blood-stained pages of the world's history ! Thinking of this, with the sadness which it must bring to every heart that vainly tries to solve the mysterious problem of human life, Ernest thought, too, of the "old, old story" he had heard so often, with ears but half comprehending,—of the Divine Love, which had become one with misery that it might bring to it a full consolation,—which had descended into the darkness that it might drive it away with heavenly light,—into the evil that it might overcome it with good ! And he seemed to feel, as he had never done before, how, for his own troubled, burdened heart, as well as for a troubled, burdened world, there was no rest short of that perfect, highest Love. As he slowly descended, amid the deepening shadows of the maples and pines, a strange peace seemed to fall on his heart as gently as the dew ; for amidst the perplexities and burdens that lay heavily upon his thoughts, that great Divine-human heart that throbbed unseen,—the very pulse of the fair "nature" around,—was drawing him to itself, to rest, with a dimly realising trust on its own perfect, all-sufficing strength.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE ELMS.

"Death is cold, but life is warm,
And the fervent days we knew,
Ere our hopes grew faint and few,
Claim, even now, a happy sigh,
Thinking of those hours gone by."

CAPTAIN PERCIVAL had been duly introduced to Lilius, not neglecting the opportunity of paying some delicate compliments, such as, in those days, were a matter-of-course courtesy to ladies, and which Lilius had seen enough of military society to take as such, though in this case they represented the true sentiments of the speaker more accurately than was often the case. And, after a course of semi-starvation at wretched inns, the Captain was quite in a condition to enjoy heartily the hospitable meal which at The Elms was a sort of compromise between the early country "supper" and the late dinner of what the Major still called "civilized" life. It was, with him, the most substantial meal of the day, and he enjoyed it especially, when, as in the present instance, he had a guest with whom he could converse on the congenial subjects of old England and the military

news of the day. The meal was a pretty long one, retarded as it was by the flow of questions and answers ; for Major Meredith's appetite was keen for all details of news from his old well-remembered county, and Captain Percival was able to communicate so much. It was by no means exhausted even when, leaving the room where they had supped, the Major led the way to the pleasant portico, where the air was laden with the lilac blooms, dispensing their sweet evening perfume, and with the other vague wandering fragrances of a summer evening. It was very still, too, save for the occasional even-song of the birds from the tall maples and thick spruces ; and the mellow glow of the sunset lay in tremulous golden gleams among the foliage, and on the unshaven grass below. Liliás, with a bit of delicate muslin embroidery in her hand, took a low seat at a little distance from the gentlemen, listening to their talk, while the aroma of the Major's fragrant tobacco stole out to mingle with the incense-laden air. The mellow cadences of the stranger's voice, and his careless, graceful talk, were agreeable enough, yet Liliás thought regretfully of Ernest, and of the pleasant, quiet evening they would have enjoyed but for the unexpected guest. Agreeable and polished as he certainly was, the French reading and the talk that would have followed it—pleasant talk about a thousand things with a friend whom she had not seen for several weeks—would have been very much more enjoy-

able than listening to a stranger's conversation about people who were only names to her, or hearing him describe with a soldier's enthusiasm—veiled, however, by his habitually careless tone—the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, full particulars of which he had had in a letter from an old comrade. At last, when the Major's thirst for information had been pretty thoroughly satisfied, and when he and his companion had exhausted their conjectures as to Lord Wellington's probable course, and the possible results of the campaign, the talk drifted into channels nearer home, and the threatening aspect of Canadian affairs.

"It's something quite new to me," said Percival. "At home they don't seem to have any idea of such a state of things."

"Yes, they look at us through the wrong end of the spy-glass just now, and it's my opinion they're making rather a mistake. The people here are growing discontented that the folks at home seem to care so little about us, and though I always pooh-pooh such talk on principle,—it's a bad habit to get into, you know, speaking evil of authorities,—still, *entre nous*, I do think some one is making a mistake, not to be more wide awake to the designs of our neighbours here."

And then the Major launched forth into an exposition of the subject, explaining how old animosities were still rankling on both sides; how the imprudent naval pre-

tensions of Britain, and the rash, high-handed action of Admiral Humphreys, had intensely exasperated the existing ill-feeling ; how the American sympathy with Napoleon mingled with American ambition and anti-British feeling ; how the American Government seemed trying to provoke a declaration of war, even going the length of ordering such gratuitous acts of offence as the firing at peaceful merchant vessels dropping quietly down the Niagara river.

"The fact is," he added, "we've stood just about as much from them as we ought to stand, and a little more, in my opinion. We've just about come to the point when forbearance becomes weakness, and if *we* don't come to the scratch soon, *they* will !"

"Well, I can't say I should be sorry if the rascals should give us a chance to pepper them," said Percival. "It wouldn't have quite so much *renomme'e* about it as fighting the French, to be sure ; but it would, at least, be better than vegetating in your woods here, hunting deer, and the 'coons' the people talk about."

"Don't be afraid ; you'll have enough to do before long, or I'm no prophet," was the Major's reply.

Captain Percival's speech was a natural one enough for a soldier, tired of inaction, eager for the fray, and troubling himself little with deeper thoughts. But on Lillas, whose sensibilities had been excited by having the real possibilities and consequences of war brought

visibly before her imagination, it fell with a strong thrill of repulsion. Her own military ardour, which was only the romantic enthusiasm of youthful ignorance—seeing the ideal through a mist of glory that conceals the horror of the reality,—was not strong enough to prevent her from being repelled and chilled by this seemingly cold-blooded view of possible war. Captain Percival, with his graceful exterior and bearing, seemed to sink to the level of “*common*” human beings at once.

“The colonists here seem to think they have a good many things to grumble at,” he remarked, as he lighted a new cigar. And he gave a condensed *résumé* of part of the conversation in the stage.

“Well! part of it is a true bill enough! Even I can’t help seeing that, Tory as I am! If there had only been a little more ‘gumption,’ as Jacob Thurstane would say, about the Colonial Office, they might have made Canada a trump-card to Great Britain in her present troubles. If they had taken the trouble to help us with a little capital to make roads and open up the country,—offered inducements to immigration, and, in general, taken a more active interest in us,—she might have had a regular granary here, to supply her now she is cut off from the European corn-fields. As it is, the stream of emigration has drifted right past us, to add wealth and strength to our neighbours. Yankees have come in and taken up free grants, just to sell them and pocket a nice sum by

the speculation; our roads are—as you see them; and, to crown all, our Government here has exasperated the people into discontent and irritation by a grasping, selfish policy, and by unjust and despotic arrests. There's a nice state of affairs for you, with-a powerful enemy watching as a cat does a mouse;—with nearly two thousand miles of frontier to defend, and about four thousand regular soldiers to do it with, and a volunteer force small enough, and not over well organised. If Mr. Pitt had lived now, things might have been different, but England won't make good his loss in a hurry. Well, here I am, talking radical enough for our worthy shoemaker himself! I am glad there are none of our Oakridge people by to hear me. They would think I had gone 'clean daft,' as Davie Watson would say!"

And the worthy Major shook the ashes out of his pipe with a vigorous knock, and got up to walk off his little excitement by pacing up and down the avenue, while Captain Percival, turning to Liliás, began to talk to her about the English relatives who were such strangers to her beyond what she could learn of them through an occasional letter.

"Your aunt, Lady Herbert, told me to be sure to persuade Major Meredith to send you to them for a while," he said. "She said they would undertake to take excellent care of you."

Liliás smiled as she replied: "I wouldn't be afraid

of that, but I shouldn't go unless my father did ; I could not leave him alone here. I should like very much to see them all, though:—or even to know what they are like."

- Captain Percival had been watching her attentively while she spoke. A faint gleam from a light within showed dimly the outline of her features and the turn of her head, as she sat half facing him. He sat silent for a few moments, as if a chord of memory had been suddenly touched, and had abstracted him from the present. Then he replied, rather abruptly and with a slight sigh—

"Your cousin Marian, at least, strongly resembles you."

Something in his tone or manner somehow struck Liliás, and brought to her mind, all at once, a passage from one of her aunt's letters some time before, in which she had hinted at the evident attentions which a promising young officer had been paying to Marian, and she wondered whether this could be the one. She said, simply, as the only reply she could think of at the moment:—

"I should be glad to think so, for I believe my cousin is thought very pretty as well as very amiable."

"She is the former," he replied, with a slightly bitter intonation contrasting strangely with his usual gliding smoothness of tone. "The latter she may be, to people

in general, but I am unfortunate enough not to have had any special reason to think so. Not that I mean, however, to disparage Miss Herbert's excellent qualities in the least ! I have no doubt any fault there may have been was on my side."

Lilias was somewhat nonplussed at an answer so different from what she had expected, and felt relieved when her father, having walked himself into a calmer mood, came up to invite Percival to go in and finish the day by drinking a birth-day toast to his Majesty in orthodox English fashion. "And then to bed," he added, "for I am tired, and you must be doubly so, after jolting all day in that lumbering affair which we, out here, call a stage."

Lilias, after seeing that the stranger's room was in all respects comfortably prepared for the guest, retired to her own, and, putting out her light, made the moon, just rising over the tall pines to the eastward of her window, do duty instead. A good many thoughts came crowding into her mind ere she slept. The new acquaintance, in particular, furnished not a few speculations as to why he spoke with evident bitterness of her cousin. But Captain Percival soon vanished from her thoughts, to be replaced by Ernest Heathcote. She felt very sorry for him, for she saw he was feeling lonely and depressed, and she knew that life was hard for him. If it could only be made easier ! It was so easy for *her*

—comparatively. Then she thought of his anxiety about his cousin Rachel, and the words he had used, "on my own account,"—recurred to her thoughts. She wondered whether it might *not* be a little "on his own account" that he was troubled about the possibility of Rachel's affection being gained by the young lieutenant. She was so pretty and so winning; and Ernest had been so fond of her ever since she was a baby. It would not be at all surprising! And yet Lillas could not exactly imagine Ernest, so thoughtful, so intellectual, finding a life companion in a girl whose mind, as to either ideas or information, was such a *tabula rasa* as that of Rachel Thurstane. However, she had often heard old Nannie declare that there was "nae accountin' for the fancies men take, puir bodies." At any rate it was no affair of hers, and she was angry with herself that the thought should trouble her. If Ernest did care for and marry Rachel, she would be his very good friend still, as she always had been. And she would try to keep an eye on Rachel, and prevent her happiness being wrecked by the unscrupulous lieutenant. And, thinking thus, she drifted off into the land of dreams.

Captain Percival slept soundly and long in a bed whose comfortable softness and snowy linen presented a striking contrast to the varieties of the species with which he had made acquaintance in Canada, to say nothing of ship-board. When he awoke, the full sun-

shine of a June morning filled the room, screened though it partially was by the white drawn-down blind ; for venetians were not yet, even in large houses like "The Elms."

Lilias had been up for a long time before Percival descended. She had been busily engaged in various domestic avocations ; had paid her morning visit to her four-footed favourites, fed the chickens, given those delicate fowls, the young turkeys, her especial attention, helped in "seeing to" the breakfast, which, out of consideration to the stranger, was unusually late ; and had gathered the fresh bouquet of spring flowers that adorned the breakfast table, set out with the fine old china which Lilias' mother had brought with her as a bride, and which was still reserved for special occasions. And now, looking bright and fresh in her pale chintz morning-dress, neatly and simply fashioned, she was sitting, deep in "Marmion," by the open window, partly shaded by the young green leaves of a trellised grape vine. She was so absorbed in the poem that she did not notice the quiet entrance of their guest until aroused by his courteous "good morning."

"I hope you rested well?" she said, as she rose to ring the hand-bell to summon her father in from his morning round in the fields.

"Better than I have done since I left England," he replied, and the improved and brightened expression of his fair-complexioned English face seemed to show that

he had benefited by the rest. "May I look at the book that interests you so much?" he added, taking up the volume she had laid down.

"Ah! 'Marmion;' no wonder it fascinates you! It is a magnificent thing! Even I, though no great poetry lover, can appreciate it. It helped to aggravate a good deal 'the winter of my discontent,' even while it made me forget my *ennui*,—when I was lying by, confined to one room, and even to one position. You see long abstinence has made me ravenous for action," he said smiling.

"Yes, it must have been hard to read anything so stirring, when you had to keep quiet. But I am afraid I don't wish you much action of the kind you want;" she added, with her characteristic frank simplicity,—the frankness of one who had never known any need for disguise.

"Oh, but you mustn't grudge us a chance to show what we can do—we poor fellows who can't do much else than fight!" he replied. "Come, Major Meredith," he added, after returning the Major's hearty greeting, "you must help me to defend the noble art of war! I am afraid Miss Meredith isn't sound on that subject."

"Well, I don't know that I should like my little girl to enjoy the prospect of it for its own sake. There's enough misery about it always, to make one want to keep it away as long as possible. I haven't forgotten Bunker's Hill

and Brandywine, and if I could, I'd keep it off yet, even though I should have no fears for the result ; and I think the first bugle-call wouldn't leave me behind ! But come, let us have breakfast !”

The well-spread breakfast-table was tempting enough, with its light, home-made rolls, fresh eggs, dried venison, and delicious “white fish” from the lake, fresh caught that morning by black Sambo's net. Major Meredith liked to give his guests a substantial breakfast, and to see them enjoy it. He “hadn't much opinion of a man who couldn't take his breakfast,” he used to say, and he set a good example himself.

Captain Percival recurred to the subject of “Marmion.” “Since you like that kind of thing, Miss Meredith,” he said, “you must let me send you a later poem by the same author, one just published—‘The Lady of the Lake. Some people think it even finer than the other, though I can't say I do ; but there's not so much fighting in it, and that will be a recommendation in your eyes. The author, a Scotchman, has become quite celebrated of late. His poems are becoming very popular.”

“It shouldn't be such a distinction to be *facile princeps*, now-a-days, as in days I can recollect,” said Major Meredith. “There are not many great lights in literature now, so far as I can see, away out of the world as I am here.”

“Well, as regards poetry, there are the people they call the ‘Lake Poets,’—Wordsworth, Southey, and so on.

Some people think a great deal of their poetry, though, to my taste, any of it that I have seen seems very prosy and dull. And there's a young nobleman—Lord Byron—has made some very clever hits. I shouldn't wonder if we heard more from him yet, if he doesn't kill himself soon by the hard life he lives. Then there's Mr. Bentham and some of his radical friends, who are bringing out all sorts of queer notions in political economy;" added the young officer, somewhat scornfully.

"Ah, those were the days! the time when I was a young fellow like you," pursued the Major regretfully, and rather as if he were following his own train of thought than replying to the other. "Why, my dear sir, when I was your age, and was quartered in Kensington Barracks, one had only to take a ramble about town to get a sight of men, ay and women too, whose names have been in men's mouths ever since! Or, if you went to Parliament House, it's ten chances to one that you would hear Pitt or Fox, or Burke—perhaps Hartley—a man that could speak five or six hours on a stretch, and so was a natural curiosity, prosy as he was. Why, once he was known to speak from five in the afternoon till ten, while his opponent, Mr. Jenkinson, went off for a ride into the country, spent the evening out of town, and came leisurely back to find him speaking still! Then you might hear Garrick or Mrs. Siddons at Drury Lane or Covent Garden; and there you might see in one row, sitting, with tears in

their eyes, listening to 'Romeo and Juliet,'—Burke and Reynolds, and Gibbon, and Sheridan, and Fox, as I saw them one night that I went there with your poor father and Ned Selwyn, of the Navy, who went down in the Royal George, poor fellow ! As for Fox, he made a point of going to hear Mrs. Siddons whenever it was possible."

"Yes, I've often heard my father speak of those times," said Percival ; "and he took me once, as a boy, to hear Mrs. Siddons, who was magnificent even then."

"And if you went to Ranelagh or the Pantheon of an evening, and knew who was who, what people you might see ! Horace Walpole,—Lord Keppel,—Sir Joshua Reynolds, perhaps, or Mrs. Montague, or Mrs. Thrale, with Piozzi. Or taking a walk along Fleet-street you might see old Dr. Johnson sauntering along, with Bozzy beside him, like a great hulking man-of-war with a smart corvette alongside. Ah, those were the times !" he repeated with a sigh, forgetting his unfinished breakfast in the train of reminiscences he had called up before his mental vision. "And Lillias here doesn't even know what Fleet-street or Ranelagh is like,—brought up among Indians and rustics !" he added half regretfully.

"A deficiency of knowledge which I trust she will make up ere long, when you take her over for a visit, Major. Yet I don't know but Miss Meredith is quite as well without some of the lessons she might have learned in the 'great world ;'"—added Percival, glancing with a certain

respectful admiration at Liliass' bright, attentive face, its innocent freshness all undimmed by the glare and excitement of London "seasons." "However," he added, "Miss Meredith would find an abundance of things and people to interest her in London, I do not doubt."

"I should like to see Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Clarkson, and Mr. Granville Sharp;" said Liliass;—these being the heroes who loomed most largely in her imagination, seen through the halo with which the enthusiastic admiration of Ernest Heathcote had invested them.

Captain Percival smiled. They were not precisely the class of objects he had thought most likely to interest a young girl new to the world of London.

"My little girl is a devotee of the abolitionists," said Major Meredith. "She's got an old negress here who can tell something of the horrors of the slave trade; and hearing some of her stories of what she has felt and seen makes even my old English blood boil up!"

"Yes, there's no doubt it was a scandalous iniquity for a free country like England to be keeping up such a traffic, and Wilberforce and his friends deserve great credit;" replied Percival, but the faint praise sounded chilling to Liliass, accustomed to Ernest Heathcote's intense feeling on the subject.

"Of course you've heard, Major, of all the wonders Watt and Arkwright have been performing with steam;" pursued the Captain. "They will revolutionise all our

travelling, industrial arts,—everything,—if they go on as they are doing."

"Yes, it's wonderful,—wonderful ! We've one steamboat down in Lower Canada, the 'Acommodation,' between Montreal and Quebec ; you came up in it, eh ? Well, I took Liliass for a trip in it up and down, when I was bringing her away from school, and I felt just like a child looking at a new toy ! I couldn't take my eyes off that witchcraft-looking walking-beam, going up and down, up and down, till it makes one tired to look at it, and never a sail to hoist or reef, or need to care which way the wind blows ! It did seem more like black art to me than anything else !"

"Yes, it's a wonderful invention. I expect they'll be crossing the Atlantic with steam vessels before long."

"I see they're talking of it, by the papers. Though how they'll get fuel enough stowed away, I can't see. Well, if ever that time comes, Liliass, I'll take you a run across ! And then this wonderful project of running steam carriages ;—that does seem a wild idea ! Do you think they'll ever manage it ?"

"I shouldn't like to say what they might not manage ; they've succeeded with so many queer things ;" replied Percival.

"Just think, Liliass," said the Major ; "a carriage propelled by steam, puffing along our road here ! That *would* be a change from John Wardle's lumbering stage, and I

suppose it would go a trifle faster. What a commotion it would make, and how it would frighten all the horses and cows !”

And Lillas, as well as her father, laughed at the possibility.

“That objection has been urged against it at home,” replied Percival, gravely ; “but I suppose the creatures would get used to it in time.”

The breakfast and the talk being at last ended, Captain Percival volunteered his services in opening the deal box addressed to Miss Meredith, which still stood in the lobby. Lillas very willingly accepted the offer, for she was rather impatient to have its concealed treasures brought to light. The opening of a box from England was always a pleasant little bit of excitement. Lady Herbert, who very much pitied the wild Canadian exile of her brother's daughter, availed herself of every opportunity to send contributions to her wardrobe of the latest London style, so that “the poor girl might have something fit to wear, if she *did* live in the backwoods ;” and there were always some pretty, graceful trifles, besides, from Lillas' cousins ;—little odds and ends, bearing the stamp and exhaling the aroma of a world of civilization and invention very different from the rude simplicity of primitive Canadian life.

So, on this occasion, after exhausting her own and old Nannie's admiration over the delicately embroidered

"frock" of India muslin, the "spencer" of rich "changing" silk, and the pretty cottage bonnet, with its wreath of wild rosebuds, constituting a toilette that would have been faultless on Oxford-street or the Mall,—Lilias delightedly drew out of manifold paper and wrappers a pretty vase of the new Wedgewood ware, gracefully painted ; a brightly bound "annual;" a gilt-topped scent-bottle ; and last, but not least, a prettily painted miniature of her cousin, Marian Herbert. This was the crowning gift of all, for Lilias had never before seen a portrait of any of her English relatives, except the rather stiff one of her aunt, as a little girl, which hung on the sitting-room wall. As she handed the picture to Captain Percival for inspection, after a long and admiring survey, she could not help glancing at him with a little curiosity. She caught a passing expression of pain, mingled perhaps with a tinge of pique ; but his rather dry expression of opinion as he praised the likeness as a good one, did not enlighten her much as to the feelings with which he regarded her cousin.

There was, however, in the box, along with the file of newspapers,—a welcome sight to the Major,—and the long letter from his sister, still more welcome in a time when trans-Atlantic communication was even more unfrequent and precarious than usual,—a shorter letter to Lilias from her cousin, in which, after the usual rather formal expressions of cousinly good wishes and of the desire that she would visit England, the fair writer seemed rather

to dwell on the mention of Captain Percival, about whose health, she said, his friends were still anxious. "If you, my dear cousin," ran the letter, "will kindly mention particularly his health and welfare when you write, it will, I am sure, be very grateful to his family while so widely separated from him, as I will take care to tell them of any tidings you may send me."

Lilias smiled to herself a quiet little smile, and resolved to keep her cousin well supplied with all the information she could give her.

CHAPTER V.

AN AFTERNOON RIDE.

"Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing.

Down all our line a deafening shout,—God save our lord the King!"

MAJOR MEREDITH had planned a little afternoon excursion, on horseback of course, to amuse his guest by showing him something of the surrounding country, and what was more especially interesting to himself, to point out the gradual improvements that the settlers were making on their "clearings," and other signs of progress and development. These, as he felt himself to be in some sort grand seigneur of the district, he took a pride in demonstrating to a stranger, filling in the picture with a graphic description of what *had* been,—only a few years before.

"We'll go back as far as Tom Winter's clearing, Lilies," said he, "then come out on the lake shore by the Red Cedars, and home by the Lake Farm. Mrs. Thurstane will give us some curds and cream, and we'll show Captain Percival pretty little Rachel, and Jacob Thurstane. Oh! by the way, he was one of your fellow-travellers yesterday, Percival. There's a man would do credit to any

country,—sturdy, honest old loyalist that he is! He's been my right-hand man for many a year."

The little party set out, Captain Percival mounted on the best riding-horse the Major possessed,—Hector being still *hors de combat*;—and taking a bridle-path that led into the deep heart of the forest, rode gently along a devious way; winding mysteriously amid soft confused blendings of light and shade, now in a deep shadow through which the June sunlight could scarcely penetrate, now amid flickering sunbeams that struggled through interlaced boughs of hemlock, oak and iron-wood. Sometimes the path lay along a damp morass, where mud-holes were frequent, but where the stones were covered with velvety emerald moss, and crested with clusters of immense ferns,—and where the long trailing creepers of the partridge-berry, with its snowy waxen blossoms, or the deep, dark wintergreen, carpeted the way. Now and then they came out upon a bright open bit of clearing, and fields green with the young grain; and from the log "shanty" came out the inmates, well pleased to have a visit from the Major, whose appreciation of and sympathy with their labours they knew they could count upon, and duly impressed with the honour of a visit from one of His Majesty's officers in active service. The men were eager to know from him what was said "at home" about the "Yankees," and the women listened anxiously while war possibilities were discussed,—the enthusiastic, hardy land-

tillers declaring their readiness to turn out for King and Country, to the last drop of blood.

"It will go hard with us if we don't keep the country for the King, God bless him!"—said one of the loyal old pensioners, between whom and United Empire loyalists the land in the neighbourhood was pretty equally divided. The visitors received many pressing invitations to partake of such simple hospitality as their cabins could command, and it was all the Major could do to get away from his friends without giving offence. But when Tom Winter's "shanty" was reached, the old wooden-legged seaman would take no denial. "His honour, and the Captain, and Miss Liliass too, must take a bit," or at least drink the King's health with him in a glass of the "grog," of which report said old Tom was rather fonder than was good for him. Yet, if so, its bad effect was more than counterbalanced by his laborious open-air life, for his ruddy-brown complexion showed as hale and healthy under the white hair and above the white beard as when, in the West India squadron under Admiral Rodney, he had exchanged his original limb of flesh and blood for the wooden one on which he now hobbled about. His "old woman," full of old English idioms, as quaint as her mob cap, was almost as bright and "clever" as when she had danced on a village green around a May-pole, in days when such an institution still flourished. Having got a grant of land in Canada in lieu of pension, the old sailor

had gone to work with his axe as bravely as he had ever helped to fire a broadside into an opposing squadron; and now his little farm could bear a good comparison with any in that fertile district. He led his visitors about it proudly enough, telling the Captain, with whom he fraternised at once on the ground of "His Majesty's Service," how many a tough battle he had had with the forest giants before his log-hut was raised, intermingling his pleased talk concerning his little crops, with anecdotes, which he was never tired of ventilating, about his old commander in the West India squadron, and the various chances of the "American War," all of which were still vivid and fresh in a mind which, for so many years, had known little to mark the passage of time save growing infirmities, and the monotonous changes of the season in the forest wilderness. When at last, much against his will, he had to let his visitors depart he gave them a feeble parting cheer, and another for His Majesty—protesting to the last, that if those rascally Yankees did come, they should find a good broadside awaiting them from his old rifle, which had shot a good many wolves and deer in its day.

The forest grew more open after leaving Tom Winter's cabin,—the clearings more frequent. They passed open rocky dells filled with a profuse growth of underwood, all snowy with clustered blossoms—dog-wood, elder, wild-plum and cherry, and Canadian hawthorn; and sometimes, overpowering all the other sweet scents that filled

the air, a waft of luscious fragrance crossed their path from an immense wild grape-vine, which threw its almost tropical luxuriance from tree to tree in rich and graceful festoons. Here and there a squirrel or "chipmunk" darted across the path and sprang up the nearest tree, whence it sent forth its eager chattering chirp ; or a bright blue-bird or a scarlet tanager made a flash of coloured light as it flew into the green shadow of the forest ; or the plaintive cry of the cat-bird came mysteriously out of some shady covert. Sometimes, too, what looked like long striped sticks lying in their path, moved and wriggled away into the shadow of the nearest shrub. "These are only harmless garter-snakes," explained the Major, "but you need to be on your guard, for rattlesnakes often lurk in these moist bits of woods, and may be upon you before you know."

It was not long before they had ocular demonstration of the truth of his words. At a turn in the road they came suddenly upon a solitary squaw, sitting wrapped in her blanket, on a stone by the road-side. She held a papoose to her breast, and seemed overcome with fatigue and drowsiness, for she was leaning with closed eyes, and evidently half asleep, against the trunk of a tree behind her. Captain Percival at once recognized the squaw who had been his fellow-traveller the day before, but before he could speak, Major Meredith darted forward with a shout that awoke her at once.

"A rattlesnake!" said Liliás, in a low tone of horror; and almost before Percival could distinguish the creature, which, with erected head, was gliding towards the sleeping squaw with its ominous rattle, the Major had sprung from his horse and despatched the noxious reptile with one blow of his riding-whip. The squaw started up, instinctively clasping her child to her breast, before she saw what the danger really was. The Major greeted her as an old acquaintance, and pointing to the dead snake, addressed her in the broken dialect, half Indian, half English, which the Indians used, asking her how she came to go to sleep in so dangerous a place. The squaw said hardly a word, only looked timidly into his face with a half shy, half mournful smile, her dark expressive eyes conveying the thanks she could not speak. In a minute or two her husband came up, rifle in hand, with which he had been shooting squirrels. Then the squaw's tongue seemed loosed, and she explained to him in her native language, in low soft accents, pointing to the Major and the dead rattlesnake. He came up to the Major, who had remounted, and saluting him and Liliás with grave respect, spoke a few earnest words of thanks, ending with,— "Black Hawk no forget white Sachem saved squaw's life."

"He's a fine fellow that," said the Major as they moved on; "I have known him from a boy, and his father before him. They belong to one of the bravest tribes of our Indian allies. Yonder is their encampment, on that rising

ground half hidden by the trees, on the other side of the creek."

Captain Percival could just distinguish, across the dark glistening waters of the winding creek, the outlines of several wigwams, so disposed as to be almost concealed by the trees, the white smoke curling from a fire in front, around which some dark figures were flitting.

They came out at last on the fresh breezy lake, ruffled out of its soft blue of the day before, into a deeper, colder hue, on which in the distance some snowy white-caps were to be distinguished. The captain declared that it was almost as good as the sea, as the wide expanse opened before them between the boughs of the majestic cedars that here fringed the shore, some of them bending over it in fantastic forms; and the cool fresh breeze that curled the wavelets over on the white pebbles fanned their faces, heated with the long ride.

There was a mile or two of good road before they reached the Lake Farm, and some level stretches of beach, upon which the horses, inspirited by the breeze, cantered gaily along. They rode up the lane, fringed with low trees and bushes, Lilian talking with unusual animation after the brisk ride.

The farm-house was built of logs, like most farm-houses of that day, but was larger and more commodious than most; and about a rude porch, and over the front wall, climbed a luxuriant wild vine, filling the air with the

delicious fragrance of its blossoms. The festoons of green leaves framed a pretty picture—Rachel Thurstane sitting at her spinning-wheel, her softly rounded, childish face, with its fresh peachy tints, showing clear against the interior. On the door-step Ernest Heathcote was sitting in a half reclining attitude, apparently reading aloud.

"Ah! quite an Arcadian picture!" exclaimed Captain Percival to Lilius, in a low tone, as they approached. "Corydon and Phillis only want crooks and shepherds' hats to make it perfect! I declare the little girl has quite the face of a *Greuze*."

Lilius hardly knew why the Captain's light, careless remark caused a slight thrill of pain, akin to that she had felt the day before when Ernest had spoken of his cousin. She was provoked with herself. Why should it annoy her that Rachel and he should make an Arcadian picture? And why should he *not* be reading to his cousin? What could be more natural? Yet she would hardly have thought there could have been intellectual sympathy enough between them for that, for Rachel did not care for books. Somehow, in spite of her efforts, Lilius' animation vanished, and it was with a grave, almost an abstracted manner, that she responded to the delighted greeting of Ernest, who came forward eagerly to assist her to dismount, with a ready courtesy of bearing in which even the critical Percival could find no fault.

Rachel shrank back on seeing a stranger with her old

friends, while Mrs. Thurstane, in her grey homespun gown, white kerchief and cap, and her sweet, calm, patient face, came forward to do the honours of her humble home with the quiet dignity of her Quaker character, as her visitors gladly sat down to rest in the cool, clean apartment which, half kitchen, half sitting-room, was the family living-room ;—the small windows needing no other curtains than the interlacing green leaves of the vine. The Major greeted his favourite Rachel with his usual playful friendship, and brought her forward to be introduced. The child, for she was hardly more, was really very pretty, with a soft fawn-like look, and a slight archness about the blue eyes and rounded eyebrows that gave some character to what otherwise would have been a face of mere placid contentment. But the presence of the strange officer made her shy and silent, and she was evidently very glad when Liliās—with whom she had always been a sort of pet—proposed that she should go with her for their usual ramble.

Ernest gladly availed himself of the opportunity to accompany them, pleased to enjoy the society of Liliās for a little while out of reach of Percival's observant eyes, which, he felt or fancied, rested critically, if not curiously, on himself whenever he tried to talk to her ; even though he did so, instinctively, with a deference of manner greater than was usual to the frank and friendly terms of intimacy on which they stood. There are other ways than words,

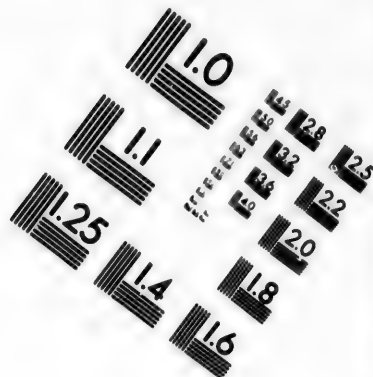
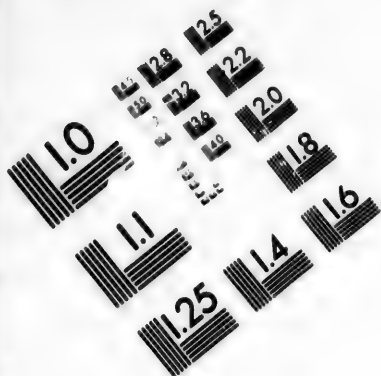
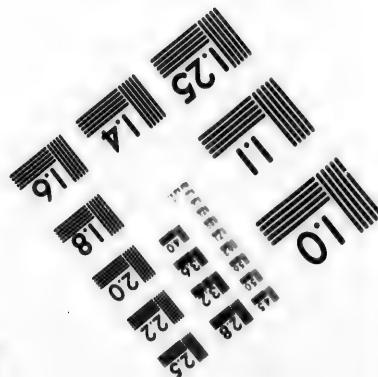
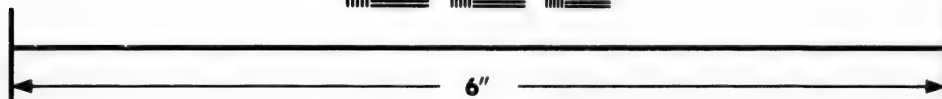
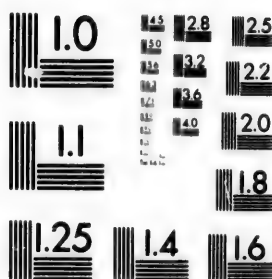


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or even looks, by which we learn to understand the sentiments of others, and Ernest knew as well as if he had been told, that this stranger, who, without any offensive assumption of superiority, evidently considered him an inferior, would set down as presumption on his part any token of the intimacy which really existed between him and Miss Meredith. Lilius was quick to feel the difference in his manner, and it added to the slight constraint of her own, so that both breathed an inward sigh of relief when they found themselves out in the fresh breezy pasture fields, amid frisking lambs and placid browsing cows ; and the influence of the sweet pure air, and the foam-flecked lake, whose pale azure waves were curling on the sandy beach below, dispersed the slight constraint and restored the old frank freedom. They sat down to rest on the upturned old punt, now hopelessly leaky, in which Ernest had often rowed Lilius and Rachel in summer evenings when the lake lay calm as a sea of glass, and the placid water over which they floated seemed, in its rich sunset tints, a liquid commingling of amethyst and ruby, garnet and topaz. Now it was a deep intense blue, crested with tiny snow-wreaths, and they sat watching the pure limpid green of the waves that curled at their feet, reflecting their snowy crests in their glassy bosoms ere they fell in a confused mass, to be succeeded by another and another ;— emblems, as Ernest was wont to say, of the ever restless tide of life.

As they sat they talked of old times with the half-regretful pleasure that is, somehow, slightly mingled with sadness, even while the "old days" are not so very old, and do not as yet seem cut off from the present by any impassable gulf.

"And do you remember, Miss Liliass," said Rachel, in the midst of their reminiscences, "the day when we tipped over the boat and fell in, and how Ernest pulled us out? And I was so angry because he cared so much the most about your getting wet, and was so afraid you would take cold, not seeming to care whether I did; and I went off crying, and told mother?"

"You were a silly child," said Ernest, laughing, but his eyes had met those of Liliass in an involuntary, half-conscious glance. She did not know what there was in the look to call forth the quick blush that, to her annoyance, rose to her cheek, and Ernest stooped to pick up a pebble to hide his own heightened colour. He changed the subject by asking—

"Have you read 'Marion' yet, Miss Liliass?"

"Yes, a good deal, and I can't tell you how splendid I think it is! Poor Constance Beverly! How could women be so cruel as those old abbesses? And Marion—I hope he suffered for deserting her so; though I'm sure he didn't think he was leaving her to die. Captain Percival says there's a later poem by the same author, which some people think even finer. He has it in his baggage, and is

going to send it to me ; and when I get it you shall read it too."

Ernest's expression clouded over somewhat. This trifling circumstance seemed to bring back his misgivings in full force ; but he said nothing, and they strolled back to the farmyard, Rachel being eager to show Miss Lillas her young broods of chickens, goslings and turkeys, before she was called to partake of the hospitable repast that Mrs. Thurstane was preparing.

The Major was inspecting the farmyard and fields with his friend Jacob, and Captain Percival, who was following them about, looked so uninterested in their proceedings that, as "the boys" were out of the way, Ernest sacrificed his own inclination to courtesy, and joining Captain Percival, invited him to come and see a span of horses, raised on the farm, of which the farmer was very proud. Being thus thrown upon each other for a time, the two young men were compelled to talk ; and Percival found, to his surprise, that Ernest, whom he had looked upon somewhat contemptuously as a "homebred Canadian," could talk well, not only about horses, but about other things too.

Lillas, meantime, managed to draw Rachel out about her new admirer, which was not difficult, as the girl was evidently glad to talk about him with a half shy pleasure which, of itself, indicated danger. Lillas fully redeemed her promise to Ernest, in warning Rachel, as gently, but

as earnestly as she could, not to attach any importance to such admiration as he might profess, as it was not likely to mean anything but a careless flirtation, such as young officers were only too apt to vary their idleness with. Rachel bore her moralising strain with a little visible impatience, and rather coquettishly declared that she couldn't help his coming and talking to her.

"Then never let him talk to you except when your mother is by, Rachel dear."

Rachel blushed. She knew that the lieutenant had always managed to see her apart from her mother, and that her good mother knew nothing of the extent to which he had carried his flirtation already.

"I know your mother would be vexed at your having anything to do with such a young man as that is, and so would your cousin"—continued Lillas, bringing out almost unconsciously the thought that was still uppermost in her own mind.

"Ernest! Well, *he* hasn't anything to do with it at any rate, if he did lecture me about it. I'm sure it's no affair of his who I like, or who likes me," said Rachel, with a little saucy pettishness, like a spoilt child.

The girl's tone and words communicated a certain sense of relief to Lillas' mind, not very intelligible to herself; but she continued, from a sense of duty, to repeat such words of warning as she thought most to the purpose. Rachel—whose impatience manifested itself no further

than by twisting at the folds of the blue homespun dress, bare of ornament, which yet seemed to set off her bright piquant face as daintily as Liliás' riding habit did her more *spirituelle* loveliness—was not sorry when the *tete-a-tete* was terminated by the approach of Mrs. Thurstane, dressed in her Sunday grey gown and spotless white-frilled cap, coming to ask Liliás, in her sweet quiet tones, to come in and partake of the repast she had prepared for her visitors.

It was spread in the family living-room, the only sitting-room, in which the dresser, with its rows of dishes, and the spinning-wheel set back near the door, did not, somehow, look out of keeping with the book-shelves and flute, and cushioned armchair on the other side; such was the air of harmony which Mrs. Thurstane's neatness, and tasteful—not prim—orderliness gave to all her household arrangements. The spotless white floor was spread with several rag mats of bright colours, woven by the busy fingers of the mother and daughter, and two or three rude prints of sacred subjects decorated the walls, while an immense bunch of lilacs and May-blossoms, in a brown earthenware dish, made the whole apartment sweet with vernal fragrance.

The farmer, and his wife and daughter, sat respectfully by, not sharing the bountiful repast provided for their guests, which included, over and above the "curds and cream" requested by the Major, such other dainties as

chicken salad, custard, "Johnny cake," &c., which Mrs. Thurstane was noted for her skill in preparing. Major Meredith, as usual, talked jocularly to Mrs. Thurstane as she waited upon them, pressing them to take everything set before them; and she responded with the usual gentle smile, except when he touched upon the war. Then the smile vanished, and a painfully anxious expression clouded her usually clear brow. The mother of three sons, stalwart, vigorous young men, all "training" in the volunteer militia, had too much at stake in any possible outbreak of hostilities,—to say nothing of an intense aversion to war, instilled by her Quaker training—to permit any response to playfulness in approaching that subject, and the Major, quietly taking the cue, with true gentlemanly feeling dropped it at once.

Ernest had disappeared, and did not reappear till the party were taking their departure. Then, however, he turned up, ready to assist Lillas to mount, by his promptness forestalling Captain Percival in the attention.

"Won't you come back with us, and spend the rest of the evening?" Lillas asked as she gathered up her reins. "You can get a horse in a minute and overtake us."

"No, thank you, I think I had better not," replied Ernest, half reluctant to decline.

"Oh, do! We have seen so little of you this time; and I suppose you will return to Newark on Monday. I should think you would like to talk to Captain Percival,

"No, thank you, that is no inducement," he said, with a half smile. "I really *must* not."

Lilias felt a little vexed at his refusal. He had always gladly accepted such invitations. Without stopping to think, she said, half playfully, half in earnest—

"I suppose you want to mount guard over Rachel. Are you afraid Lieutenant Payne is lurking about?"

Ernest looked up at her in silent surprise. The subject of Rachel was so remote from his mind at that moment, and anything like banter of this kind was so unlike Lilias' simple, straightforward frankness, that he had for the moment no reply to make. But Lilias had repented of her unconsidered words the moment they were uttered, and Ernest's surprised look seemed to her a mute reproach, which sent a warm flush over cheek and brow. Ernest averted his glance the moment he saw her embarrassment and then said, quietly—

"I should have thought you would have known that I would be only too glad to go to the Elms at any time ! But I don't feel as if I could, just now. Your new friend," he continued, in a low tone, "evidently disapproves of me, and I don't care to subject myself to his criticism. I can see that he thinks me very presumptuous in talking to you now."

"What nonsense ! that must be a mere fancy of yours. He is cold in his manner at first—most Englishmen are, I think ; but when you know him better, I think he is very agreeable !"

Ernest was silent. If Lillas liked the stranger, he would not commit himself to any unfavorable opinion of him. But he checked his first impulse to say good-bye at the door, and walked by her pony's side down the lane that led to the road, Captain Percival riding on in front with Major Meredith when he saw the young lady thus accompanied. He was not himself conscious of any special interest in Lillas, or of any particular wish to monopolise her society. But her evident intimacy with Ernest annoyed him, grating upon his fastidious ideas of the fitness of things, and he could not resist saying to the Major with a slightly significant air, which, however, was quite lost on his companion—

"That young man seems to be a great friend of your daughter's."

"Oh, yes," he replied, with his usual good humour, "Lillas thinks a great deal of him ; and he deserves it, for he's a fine lad—a diligent, steady lad,—and he has made good use of his opportunities."

Percival let the subject drop, seeing that the Major was quite obtuse to any possibilities that might arise from the intimacy. The truth was that, owing to early habits and training, the invisible social dividing lines were so clearly fixed in his own mind, that he expected them to be as distinct and rigid to every one else ; and he would as soon have expected to see the stars straying out of their courses as to find an attachment springing up between his daughter and Ernest Heathcote.

When Liliás, having said good-bye to Ernest, cantered up to her companions, Captain Percival at once started an animated conversation, keeping up a sort of bantering warfare on subjects on which they disagreed. In the course of it he ventured on one or two remarks about Ernest, with just a *soupcón* of ridicule about them, which Liliás was quick to perceive, and he was surprised at the simple dignity of manner with which, though with a slightly flushed cheek, she put down such attempts at once. He did not repeat the experiment, seeing that she was too staunch to her friend to permit any disparagement of him, and having too much gentlemanlike instinct to persist in what evidently annoyed her. Liliás' inward thought was—"Ernest was right ; I am glad, after all, he did not come !"

The next day being Sunday, the people of the little hamlet, and of the neighbourhood for some miles round, collected in the little grey church. Clergymen were then so few and far between that it was but seldom what was then considered the luxury of a sermon came in their way, but the Major always had the Church of England service read by a devout old man, with white flowing hair, who had long officiated as a clerk "at home," the Major himself leading the responses. The people around, of whatever religious name—staunch Puritans, like the Thurstanes,—Presbyterians, like Davie Watson,—Methodists, like aunt Judy,—gladly came together, and heartily joined

in the solemn service, which was their only opportunity for social worship. And perhaps, on that sweet June Sabbath, with the fragrant breeze carrying in through the small window the scent of the waving pines without ; with the songs of the birds, the hum of insects, and the rustling of leaves taking the place of an organ "voluntary ;" and all nature breathing of peace and tranquillity, the hearts and lips of the worshippers joined with intenser fervour than usual in the words :—

"Give peace in our time, O Lord."

"Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God."

Words which repeated themselves in many a heart in the anxious times that followed, leading them to look up above the darkening horizon to the ever-present, Invisible Helper—for sorely needed strength, comfort and hope.

After the service Ernest came up to Liliás, lingering a little in the peaceful churchyard, to say good-bye, as he was obliged to return to his duties at Newark next morning. Liliás did not press him, this time, to come to The Elms.

"And when will you be here again ?" she asked. It seemed harder to say good-bye, this time, than usual.

"That must depend on a good many things," he said. "And there is no knowing what may happen before I see you again."

They looked at each other gravely. There is not much to be said when the heart is full of vague oppressive fears

that will not be put into words. But their eyes said more than they knew. For a moment Ernest was tempted to yield to his inward prompting to say something that would show Liliás his heart. But the sight of Major Meredith's grey head in the distance, the remembrance of his past kindness, of the breach of trust which he would consider such an attempt to be, checked him in time. He could not help, however, the long pressure of Liliás' little gloved hand, the long wistful look as he turned away, which haunted her for many days after. And, somehow, as she slowly turned her steps homeward by the private path, the vague weight at her heart grew heavier and heavier, till, by the time she reached her own apartment, she was fain to find relief in a burst of tears, the traces of which she had some trouble in removing before going down to meet her father and Captain Percival at dinner.

That night Liliás found it hard to go to sleep. Ernest's look had let into her mind a light which she would not have allowed herself to put into words, but which very much increased the vague anxiety and restlessness that had begun to oppress her. And as she watched, with eyes which would not grow sleepy, the late waning moon silver the lake with a sorrowful sort of radiance, she felt overcome by the sadness which besets us when any pleasant, tranquil chapter of our past life seems closed for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

MARJORIE.

"A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid,—
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed."

A WEEK or two of the pleasant June weather had glided by. The lilac blossoms had nearly all fallen off now, and those which remained were faded and withering. The spring flowers were over, and the June roses were beginning to open their deep-tinted petals. The apple-blossoms had long ago disappeared, and the young green apples were already formed in their place. The little, blue, spotted eggs in the nests that lay snugly ensconced in the spruces at the Elms—whose young cones were now making them so bright a green—had been chipped by tiny beaks, and the nests held a callow, confused mass, from which gaped wide little mouths as the parent-birds came chirping home. The butterflies were beginning to dart in and out among the leaves, the tiny humming-birds were hanging from the opening honeysuckles, busily drawing forth their sweet, hidden treasure, and the air was full of the hum and stir and life of the rapidly maturing summer.

Lilias has finished her morning round of active duties,

which, this morning, has included bread-making,—for it is washing-day and the other hands are full,—and has taken out her needlework to the grassy, shaded grounds in front of the house ; for on such summer days the rooms within, with their small windows and spare dark furnishings, look gloomy and uninviting, compared with the glory and the beauty of out-door sunshine and quivering green shadow. So Liliás sits at her work of mending household linen, with the graceful waving boughs of a large hickory lying like a green cloud between her and the blue sky, and the flitting shadows of the leaves glimmering over the grass at her feet, and the soft warm air, full of summer scents, disarranging her soft brown locks ; while she now and then exchanges a pleasant word or two with old Nannie, who is “ putting out ” some of her young mistress’ muslins and laces to bleach, where they are not so likely to be interfered with by the profane feet of chickens or geese as in the ordinary bleaching-ground.

Liliás is scarcely looking as bright and tranquilly happy as is her wont, and her usually serene brow is slightly clouded. Indeed she has been feeling, during the last two or three days, while her father has been absent at Newark, more lonely than she remembers ever to have felt in her life before. For one thing, Captain Percival’s departure, after his stay of about a week, left a perceptible blank. For he had shaken off his ordinary carelessness of manner, and had really exerted himself to make his visit agreeable to

his kind entertainers, a thing he was quite able to do if he pleased. He rode and walked, and chatted with Liliás, who could not help finding in him a very pleasant companion : a companion, too, who knew much about many things of which she was so ignorant ; who could tell her much that she wanted to know, and behind all whose pleasant flow of talk and anecdote there seemed to lie, like a misty, sun-lit atmosphere, the "home" life and "home" scenes that had haunted her imagination from her childhood. He was an accomplished rider, and, mounting her upon his own steed, as soon as Hector had recovered from his lameness, he gave her lessons in the art of leaping, which she had as yet scarcely tried ;—Liliás finding the beautiful, perfectly-trained animal the very ideal of a spirited, yet docile steed, and being obliged to confess his great superiority, even as a lady's horse, to her own pet Canadian pony. In short, Captain Percival and she had become very good friends—the more so that Liliás, preoccupied with the idea that there was "something between" him and her English cousin, and not knowing that it was unusual with him to be so genial, never thought of recognizing,—in looks and tones that might have suggested the idea to a less simple-minded girl,—any special admiration of herself. She was quite unconscious that his eye sought hers more and more frequently, and she always met his glance with a frank friendliness that knew no cause for avoiding it.

But amidst all Percival's pleasant attentions, the thought of Ernest was never long absent from her mind ; his earnest, wistful look at parting was continually haunting her. Unconsciously, almost, to herself, their last two interviews had, without visible cause, given a different character to her feeling for him—a certain feeling of property in him which she would have shrunk from putting into words ; and of responsibility and care for his well-being which she had never known before. She never once thought of comparing him disadvantageously with Percival, when the latter was at his pleasantest. If *he* had more of the outward polish of a man of the world, Ernest's straightforward, unaffected simplicity seemed to bring his real inner being far nearer to her. There was a depth and strength of sympathy between him and herself which she never could feel with a man like Percival, who, with all his accomplishments and arts of pleasing, never seemed to have thought deeply about anything, or to have realised with any vividness the great spiritual realities that lie below the surface-phœntasmagoria of outward life,—to whom the prizes of the visible world seemed everything,—whose judgment and thoughts were bounded on all sides by the conventionalities of "society." Indeed his code of conventional rules often chafed and annoyed her, contrasting so strongly with the free simplicity of her secluded forest home, and of a life untouched by the worldly influences which then swayed so tyrannically English social ideas and habits.

And now that his departure had left her time and thoughts more free from distraction, he would probably have been little flattered could he have known how slightly his image retained its place in her thoughts, and how completely his somewhat despised rival engrossed them. Lillas' mind, indeed, was too full of Ernest and his well-being for its own peace. Day by day, and hour by hour, instead of simply enjoying, as she had formerly done, the changing pleasantness of her daily life—the mere joy of existence in a world so beautiful—she was inwardly following Ernest with a restless anxiety, wondering whether he was well ; whether he was happier, or at least more free from the depression which, she had seen, was weighing upon him. She thought, now, of many things that she would have liked to say to him ; and she had no means of saying them, for they had never corresponded, and she could not, of course, write to him, unless some real necessity should arise. She tried to do as Aunt Judy had taught her—to carry all her anxiety to the feet of the all-loving Father, who is so much nearer and closer to all His children than any of them are to each other. But though this soothed and calmed her for the time, it could not quite dispel the vague weight of care that rested heavily on her heart, and found expression in the frequent, unaccustomed sigh. The general feeling of anxiety about public matters, too,—like “thunder in the air”—her father's absence, and the scarcity of any authentic news, added to the burden of uneasiness and suspense.

"What is the matter, Bruno?" she said, as the faithful old dog, who had been lying near her feet, half asleep, but occasionally watching her with one half-open eye, now shook himself, gave a few preliminary growls, and then barked vociferously,—an unmistakable intimation that some one was approaching.

"Who is it, Bruno?" she said, wonderingly, knowing that her father could not be home before the evening.

Old Nannie set down the bowl with which she was sprinkling the delicate fabrics on the grass, and, shading her eyes, looked out towards the road, then came up to her young mistress.

"It's just black Cæsar, the Colonel's man, ridin' along, tired-like, poor fellow! I'll warrant he'll hae some word till ye frae Miss Marjorie. She'll be wantin' ye up there," said Nannie, the wish being "father to the thought." She had been wishing for something to enliven her young mistress, whose unusual depression her sharp eyes had quickly noticed. And then, more eager to know the object of his errand than was Lilius herself, she hurried away on her old feet to the gate, where Sambo, who had always a keen instinct for the arrival of visitors, had already waylaid his black brother, and engaged him in a brisk conversation not likely soon to come to an end.

Nannie pounced upon the letter which the man had brought for Miss Meredith, and leaving the two "hoodie-craws," as she called them, to saunter up to the stables,

finishing their talk at their leisure, she carried the epistle in triumph to Liliás. It was an elaborately-folded and heavily-sealed packet, such as letters used to be in days when envelopes were unknown, and when the large, folded sheets, too, used to contain a good deal more substantial reading than modern epistles do in these degenerate days of adhesive envelopes, postal cards and perpetually arriving mails. Liliás took it eagerly, for Marjorie was her especial and devoted friend, and Marjorie's letters were always worth reading—taking them even on their intrinsic merits. She smiled as she glanced at the opening lines, so characteristic of her friend's passion for the poems of Ossian, which, at that time, were still attracting much attention, and exercised a powerful influence over a certain class of imaginative minds. They ran thus :—

“DEAREST LILIAS.—White-armed daughter of the Lake! Bright as the moon in autumn, as the sun in a summer storm, come thou, O maid, over rocks (over corduroy-bridges) to me. Alone I am, O Liliás—alone among the pines ! Come and talk with me, Liliás ! come on the light-winged gale ! on the breeze of the desert, come !—Let me hear thy voice as thou passest, when mid-day is silent around !”

The letter then descended into a more ordinary strain, recounting how lonely the writer was feeling without her friend, and how many excellent reasons there were why that friend should come to her at once, on which account

she had seized the opportunity of Cæsar's being despatched to that part of the country on business, and had sent him six or seven miles out of the way in order to carry her missive. She mentioned Captain Percival also, who had called, bringing a note of introduction from Major Meredith. Her father, she added, was delighted with his military enthusiasm, and said that he was considered quite an acquisition by General Brock, who had come over to Fort George,—called thither, it was said, by warlike rumours, and who was likely to attach Percival to his staff.

"We have arranged an expedition to show him the Falls next week," the letter went on to say, "and several of the officers—*my hero* included—are to dine with us afterwards ; and, of course, I want you for both occasions ; so get Major Meredith to bring you over as soon as possible—to stay as long as possible."

The epistle closed with another pathetic adjuration to the "white-armed maid—lonely sunbeam of my love," to hasten to delight the heart of "her devoted Marjorie."

Nannie was, of course, speedily made acquainted with the purport of the letter, and heartily endorsed the exhortation. "For," she said, "there's naething ava' to keep ye, an' its but dowie for a young lassie to be here so much yer lane wi' naebody but an auld wifie like me, when the Major is awa' ! Sae I'll just mak' haste and get up yer mull muslin there, an' the laces, an' ye'll tak' yer bonnie new perlins frae hame to wear at the dinner ; for if the General himself's to be there, ye'll need to be braw !"

Lilias was herself in no wise disinclined for the proposition, for it was no small pleasure, in itself, to visit Marjorie in her beautiful home on the banks of the Niagara river, not far from Queenston heights ; and it would be a great relief to unburden to her friend some of the thoughts which, through their very repression, pressed so heavily upon her heart. Then, when she was, comparatively speaking, so near Newark, she might sometimes hear of Ernest,—might even see him, for he had been occasionally invited to meet her on former visits at Dunlathmon, as Colonel McLeod's residence had been Ossianically called. Major Meredith returned towards evening, bearing to Lilias polite messages from Captain Percival, who was finding great favour at Fort George, and a packet containing the promised poem of Scott's, with another small volume, both of which he begged that she would do him the favour to accept, and then Marjorie's invitation was communicated and discussed. The Major readily acceded, always glad of anything that promised to give his darling pleasure in what he felt to be her somewhat lonely life ; and he promised to remain himself to take part in the expedition to the Falls, which greatly enhanced Lilias' pleasure in the anticipation of the little excursion.

Cæsar, who had been kept all day to rest, was accordingly made the bearer of an affirmative reply, and Nannie went on vigorously with her clear-starching operations, while Major Meredith put his farming affairs in train for

another absence of a few days. When he found himself able to start, Liliás' small trunk—not a "Saratoga"—was consigned to John Wardle's care to be taken in the stage to Newark, whence it would be sent for;—while Liliás and her father took a bridle-path through the woods on horseback,—a more direct route to Dunlathmon,—thus saving a *detour* of several miles, and securing a much pleasanter journey than by the jolting waggon on the regular road.

They started early in the morning, just as the rising sun was dispersing the delicate opalescent hues of the dawn, and before the early chorus of the birds was over. It was a long journey for an equestrian one, but Liliás was a good horsewoman, and ladies were used to long equestrian journeys in those days, when there was hardly any other mode of conveyance. The sweet balmy freshness of the woods in the early morning was, of itself, a delight, which the horses as well as the riders seemed to feel, and they rode on as briskly as the nature of the path would allow. As the day grew warmer, they did not need to dread the burning rays of the sun, so impervious a screen was the wilderness of green leaves and interlacing boughs above their heads. Sometimes, indeed, they went, for shortness, by what was called a "blazed path," marked out merely by the trees being "blazed" or chipped by the axe; and there the wilderness sometimes became such a tangle of underbrush and fallen logs, that it presented no slight obstacle to their progress. Where now wave golden wheat-

fields and rich fruit orchards, bending peach-trees and trellised vines, there then stood almost a jungle of hemlock, oak, maple and beech, crowded and massed in an inextricable maze of tall lanky trees and thickly growing saplings, waving above an undergrowth of brush and ferns and lichens, clustering over the dank soil. Here and there they came to a "clearing," with its "shanty," in one of which they readily procured an extemporised luncheon of bread and milk. Late in the afternoon they came out on something more resembling a road, which was, however, only a cart-path over the rough uneven ground, left just as it had been "cleared." One side of this "road" was bounded by the usual "snake-fence," enclosing appropriated and sometimes cultivated land, while the other was, in most places, skirted by the wilderness itself in all its tangled density, fringed by fallen logs and tree-roots, each covered with a second vegetation of moss and fern.

By the time they reached Dunlathmon, the travellers were tired enough to see with pleasure the wide gate, rude enough, as most gates were in those times, that opened into Colonel McLeod's demesne. As they rode up the long winding avenue, among the tall pines that surrounded the house on all sides, and through which the setting sun was darting long feathery lines of gold, the glimmer of a white dress was discernible among the dark sweeping boughs, and in a minute or two a tall girl, with flowing raven curls and dark animated eyes, came, flushed with running, to

give her friend a warm, demonstrative greeting. In her hand she carried a small book, handsomely bound for those days, in dark brown leather and gold, at which Major Meredith glanced with a good-humoured smile, after the first salutations, and said, banteringly :

"Ossian as usual, Marjorie?"

"Of course," said Marjorie, returning the smile in kind. "And why should it not be? Do you know, Lillas, Captain Percival tells me that Bonaparte's favorite reading is Ossian, translated into Italian. So you see I have an illustrious example, Major Meredith!"

"Illustrious scoundrel!—begging your pardon, Marjorie,"—grumbled the Major, who never could see anything good or great in England's foes, even in regard to better men than Napoleon. "But there is my little kitten, Flo!" and he bent down from his saddle to give an affectionate salutation to a girl much younger, smaller and more delicately formed than Marjorie, who came bounding from the house, attended by an equally frolicsome spaniel.

The house—rather larger than The Elms—had two fronts, one with a pillared piazza towards the river, looking down upon its green stream sweeping on between precipitous banks; the other towards the avenue, having a wide portico, on which were sitting Colonel McLeod and his wife. The former, a tall, stately, chieftain-looking man, rose on the approach of his guests, and came forward to meet them with the dignified Highland courtesy which was one

of his prominent characteristics. Mrs. McLeod, a dark, languid-looking West Indian, whom the Colonel had fallen in love with and married when stationed at Barbadoes on military duty, sat still till her husband had led Lillas up the steps—making politely minute enquiries after her health and welfare. Then she came forward slowly and gracefully, to kiss her young guest's forehead, and to tell her how "charmed she was to see her sweet face again."

Marjorie speedily carried off her friend to her own room, that she might refresh herself and change her dress before coming down to the hospitable and substantial tea awaiting the hungry travellers. While she did so, Marjorie began at once to pour out all the flow of questions and answers which had been awaiting the arrival of her favourite companion; although it was only a few weeks since they had been together in York, whither Marjorie had accompanied her father to the sittings of the Legislative Assembly, of which he was a member. Their talk was interrupted only by a repeated and urgent summons to tea, where Marjorie's tall brothers, just returned from training-drill, and having taken especial care to make themselves presentable for the occasion, were waiting to greet Lillas, of whom one of them, at least, was a devoted admirer. And when the merry tea-table talk was over, the young people gathered upon the wide piazza, where the conversation soon drifted to the graver things—then not far from any one's mind—or ceased, hushed to thoughtful silence,

while they listened to the incessant rush of the stream far below the dusky trees, and watched the fire-flies, which, like irregular flitting stars, were glancing in and out among the long dark pine and hemlock boughs.

It need hardly be added that, notwithstanding Liliás' long ride and the fatigue which she had a right to feel, Marjorie and she found subjects to talk about till the night was far advanced, and the rest of the household had been long since hushed in sleep. The two girls were sufficiently unlike in character, and sufficiently like in their tastes and sympathies, to be very congenial companions. Their differing qualities of mind and disposition were, indeed, in many respects, complementary of each other. The somewhat reserved character of Liliás,—shrinking from expressing *feeling* freely, notwithstanding her frankness in matters of *opinion*,—felt the happy influence of Marjorie's warm-hearted impulsiveness, and the Celtic enthusiasm that flowed out unchecked by the most unfavourable circumstances. On the other hand, Liliás' more thoughtful and reflective mind was a salutary counterpoise to Marjorie's somewhat too great preponderance of imagination and romance. Both had been developed largely by the circumstances of her early life, as well as inherited with her Highland blood. Her mother, neither strong nor active, would have hardly weathered the roughness of a settler's life at all, but for her faithful negro maid, Dinah, the mother of Cæsar, who, once a slave, had accompanied her

young mistress to her Canadian home, and had taken upon herself, as a matter of course, all the toil and drudgery of the new forest life. Notwithstanding this, however, Mrs. McLeod always felt herself over-burdened with her household cares and her growing family ; and Marjorie had been left to roam about at will, and pick up such knowledge as she could from reading whatever came in her way. A year at school with Liliás in Montreal had been the only attempt at systematic education—with one exception. Mrs. McLeod had a naturally fine musical taste, and had been, for the time and circumstances in which she lived, a pretty good musician ; and as Marjorie had a fine, rich contralto voice, her mother had taken both pride and pleasure in training it, so that she could sing the spirited old Highland songs and plaintive coronachs in which her father delighted, in a style which he, in his inmost heart, thought almost unequalled. The great secret of her power in singing these lay, however, not so much in mere musical proficiency as in the intense enthusiasm with which she threw herself into the spirit of what she sang. For Marjorie, though she had never been out of Canada in her life, was as intensely Highland in her feelings and sympathies as any chieftain's daughter that ever stepped upon heather. Her long Highland genealogy, her father's pride in the traditions of his family, which had suffered considerably from its devotion to the Jacobite cause, and his frequent and fond reminiscences of his boyhood's

home,—an old castle on the misty shores of an Argyleshire loch,—had naturally tended to imbue her strongly with this feeling. But to the influence of her favourite Ossian, also, no small portion of it was due. Those were days in which the imagination was not supplied with food so liberally as it is now. Then, the whole mass of modern fiction, good and bad, which began with Scott, was as yet only entering into existence. Tennyson, the Brownings, and all their contemporaries,—even Mrs. Hemans and L. E. L., were, so far as their poetic fame was concerned, still in the future. And of the poets then beginning to form so bright a constellation, little more than the names had as yet reached Canada, where the facilities for the diffusion of literature, small even in Britain in comparison with what they are now, had only a very rudimentary existence. Cowper and Pope were almost the only recent English poets that had come in Marjorie's way, and they were, on the whole, too tame for her; though Lilius and she had spent some pleasant summer days over the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Shakespeare, indeed, who in a bulky volume occupied a conspicuous place in her father's small collection of books, afforded a rich pasture for an imaginative mind, and she delighted especially in "Hamlet," "The Tempest," "Julius Cæsar" and the "Midsummer Night's Dream." But the great dramatist was not at all times intense enough for Marjorie. His many-sidedness, his wide range of character, his profound philosophy and deep

insight into human motive and passion, she could hardly as yet appreciate, and his broad, sometimes coarse humour, often repelled her. She had studied, till she almost knew them by heart, her father's collection of old Scottish ballads, in which mingled—with simple but often striking imagery and touches of exquisite description—the clash of wild, fierce warfare, or a thread of romance, often terrible with the intensity of passion characteristic of impulsive, undisciplined nature and a half-savage age.

But the small dark boards of her treasured copy of Ossian contained an almost inexhaustible store of delight. The wild northern poems, with their primitive simplicity and sublimity, enchanted and stimulated her imagination, and excited the impassioned and somewhat exaggerated admiration which an enthusiastic girl will often lavish upon some particular poet, who may have chanced more especially to captivate her fancy. Many a summer hour had been dreamed away over these poems among the old whispering pines, when the wind, "soughing" among their dark boughs, seemed to breathe the wailing tones of the ancient bard. And when the autumn gales tossed about the whirling leaves, and made the pine-branches creak and sway in wild commotion, and the clouds behind them took strange fantastic forms in the dusky evening light, and the river rushed more fiercely below the precipitous foliage-clad banks—a deeper, colder green,—Marjorie's fancy would call up the shadowy forms of Malvina and

her lost lover, of Comala and Oltha, and all the mournful heroines who weep their heroes slain in battle. To her they all had the most real existence. Whoever might dispute the authenticity of the poems, she believed most firmly that "Fingal fought and Ossian sang ;" and they opened entrancing glimpses of the old, old times of her father-land—times so dim and shadowy in the far-away past. They coloured her feelings, almost unconsciously to herself, and influenced her reception of natural influences. When she visited the Falls, she used to think how the soul of Ossian would have delighted in the roar of many waters, in the snowy, tossing foam, in the misty, shadowy spray, and in the Indian legend of the spirit of the thunder crouching beneath the mist and the surging waters in the awful chasm. The Indian legends, which she delighted to collect when she had an opportunity, seemed to come the nearest of anything which she knew to the wild old songs ; even, as she fancied, the grave sad Indians, with their silent, dignified ways, and their occasional grandeur of speech—when they did speak,—must resemble to some extent the warriors of Fingal and Ossian. She sometimes, too, beguiled the long, quiet hours, which she had no magazines and few newspapers to enliven, in moulding her favourite Indian legends into tolerably good imitations of Ossian, which, however, were sacredly kept from every eye save that of Lilius.

The same influence that had developed her poetical

and romantic tendencies, had also strongly drawn out her patriotic feelings. It need scarcely be said that she was, like her father, a thorough Jacobite; that she blindly adored Mary Queen of Scots, and believed in the "divine right" of the Pretender; that she could sing all the old Jacobite songs, and envied Flora Macdonald her task of chivalrous devotion, with all her heart. She often kept up warm, though always good-humoured arguments with Lillias, whose mind, enlightened by the more thoughtful and wider views of Ernest Heathcote, could not sympathise with Marjorie's one-sided enthusiasm, fascinating as it was to her. But Marjorie's Jacobite sympathies, nevertheless, did not make her one whit the less loyal to the reigning House, or less staunch in her allegiance to Great Britain. And, as the "land of her sires," after all,—dear as it was to her,—was but a distant and somewhat misty idea, her patriotic feelings found a more immediate and definite object in "her own, her native land," to which, despite its comparative destitution of mountains and of traditions, her heart clung with a passionate fervour. The troublous times which had been closing around it, during these last years, and the dangers which seemed to threaten it, had only deepened and intensified this fervour, by giving it a more definite centre; and in her heart she often wished herself a man, or, at least, another Joan of Arc, that she might go forth with her brothers, donning sword and rifle, to train for meeting the invader, should he really come,

This being her state of mind, it was no wonder that when, in General Brock's noble character and high qualities, the whole country believed that it saw its deliverer—the leader who should safely extricate it from difficulty and danger,—Marjorie, who could observe for herself his high-mindedness, his magnanimity, his whole-souled devotion to duty—all enhanced by the knightly courtesy and grace of his manner, especially towards women,—should elevate him at once to the first rank of heroes in her Valhalla, and lavish upon him a large portion of the hero-worship of which her heart was so full. And, certainly, he was worthier than are most "heroes" so worshipped of the perfectly pure and disinterested devotion with which Marjorie regarded him. For though he had become the first of men to her, she had no thought of becoming anything to him. To her mind,

" His soul was like a star and dwelt apart ;"

and any approach to the affection which desires to monopolise would have seemed the greatest presumption. She was content to worship him from a reverential distance, and his kindly smile and cordial words, when she happened to be in his society, were quite sufficient return. And so it happened that, as the girls lay awake and talked, Marjorie had much more to say of "her hero" than Lilies had of Ernest Heathcote, whom she did not regard at all in the light of a "hero," but as a dear and trusted friend.

CHAPTER VII.

GOLDEN HOURS.

"Or in the all-golden afternoon,
A guest, or happy sister sung,
Or here she brought her harp, and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon."

ALL this time, though the Canadians in general knew it not, masses of American troops were concentrating in Michigan, preparing for the sudden onset on Canada, which was to test, at once, Brock's qualities as a general, and the mettle of the Canadian people. But, as yet, all was outwardly tranquil, and Lilius and Marjorie, as they paced the wide cool corridor that ran through the house at Dunlathmon,—both doors thrown wide open to catch every breath of air,—half persuaded themselves and each other that the storm might yet blow over, and that such horrible realities as war and bloodshed, so discordant with the fair summer scene around them, might be still averted. True, Marjorie's hopes only half pointed in the direction of peace, for though she truly dreaded the horrors and miseries of war, there was yet in her heart an under-current of longing for something thrilling, something exciting,—something to interrupt the tame current of peace-

ful everyday life with the experiences more worthy of an heroic age. And that there were heroes ready to make heroic episodes, she was sure she knew.

Colonel McLeod's house was as strange a mingling of the old and the new world as were its inmates. In the hall, a stuffed wild cat and panther,—trophies of the Colonel's hunting skill,—guarded the entrance with somewhat startling effect. The large antlers of a deer did duty as a hat stand, and a majestic stuffed eagle spread its wings above it; while, on the side, a hunting rifle, a Highland "claymore" and an officer's sword were crossed with martial effect. In the large airy drawing-room, skins chiefly did duty as carpets, and a fox-skin took the place of a hearth-rug. An ornamental dirk set with cairn-gorms, coral and shells from the West Indies, and spar and petrified moss from the Falls, were among the table ornaments, and two or three really good family portraits,—both oil-paintings and miniatures,—gave animation to the walls. Besides these there were other "curiosities" scattered about, relics of the Colonel's military experiences in different parts of the world. Liliass was never tired of looking at them when she visited Dunlathmon, and of hearing Marjorie's account of their history, and, sometimes, Mrs. McLeod's reminiscences of her West Indian home, with its intense burning sunshine, rich tropical foliage, coral and still, glassy, palm-fringed lagoons. The pictures which her words called up seemed to open to Liliass

glimpses of the distant strange world without, which her imagination, bounded by its Canadian experiences, sought wistfully to penetrate.

It need scarcely be said that the new acquisitions of poetry which Liliás had brought with her were soon produced and were eagerly seized upon by Marjorie, who devoured "Marmion" in a few hours; reading it with flushed cheek and quickened breathing, as the stirring scenes, so vividly depicted in thrilling words, passed before her mental vision. The small volume which Captain Percival had sent with the "Lady of the Lake" was Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," which, though it had been first published more than ten years before, was as new to the girls as were the poems of Scott; for in those days new books were few and rare in Canada, and often arrived there only by tardy and roundabout means. Both poems were enjoyed by the girls together, sitting under the shade of the balmy pines, or ensconced in some bosky nook on the steep declivity overlooking the river; till, driven in by the heat or the mosquitoes, they were fain to seek shelter in the cool shady hall, or the drawing-room. It would be difficult to tell whether Marjorie enjoyed most the "Lady of the Lake" or the "Ancient Mariner;" the first appealing so strongly to her Highland sympathies, and picturing so vividly the glorious scenery of her fatherland, as well as giving thrilling voice to her own love of country, and the second gratifying her passion for the weird and super-

natural,—the sublimity of the vague and undefined, the suggested, rather than described. But to Liliás, the chief charm of this fascinating poem lay—and this was owing in no small degree to the influence which Ernest Heathcote's mind had had upon her own—in the high moral feeling and purpose which breathe like a soul through the poem, not in the least injuring, but rather heightening its artistic beauty. And by their talk over the poems as they read, the two girls mutually increased and widened each other's enjoyment of them. Captain Percival had soon discovered the fact that Liliás was a guest at Dunlathmon, and had ridden over on Hector to pay a morning call, which ended in his remaining for an early dinner and staying the greater part of the day. Marjorie's watchful eyes, always keen enough in such matters, soon discovered, under his usual nonchalant and cool manner, a degree of special interest in Liliás which he evidently desired to conceal. She could see that while he talked freely with *her*, yielding to the influence of her lively animation and determination to "draw him out of his shell," and while he played at flirtation with merry little Flora, it was to Liliás that he always turned for sympathy or approval of any opinion or sentiment which came really from his heart. But Marjorie, though she heartily approved of his taste in admiring Liliás, had in her secret heart no desire to see him the successful wooer of her friend. She by no means disliked Captain Percival, in whose society she always

enjoyed, to a certain extent, the sense of collision with a nature very different from her own. She liked to carry on skirmishing conflicts on subjects regarding which there was war to the knife between them, and delighted in taunting him with his ignorance of Canadian history, as well as in enlightening it to some extent ; for, as she playfully told Liliás, she had given him a synopsis of it from the time Jacques Cartier set up his wooden cross on the shore of Chaleurs Bay,—her information being chiefly derived from the tales and traditions of old colonists. But she had no great admiration for Percival's character, so far as she could see it ; and for Ernest Heathcote she had a strong and faithful regard, and had long ago sketched out a little romance for him and Liliás, which she would have been very sorry to see interfered with by any interloper, so inferior to Ernest in all that in her eyes constituted real nobility, as was Francis Percival. It may fairly be doubted, however, whether she fully appreciated the latter, whose apparent lack of sensibility and enthusiasm repelled her, so that she could not discern the really fine qualities that lay under the outward shell of cynicism and seeming callousness.

But, that Ernest might at least have fair play,—though she would not have dared to hint at her object to Liliás,—Marjorie arranged that one of her brothers should bring him over for a visit to Dunlathmon. And there, one "all-golden afternoon," when her father and Major Meredith

were away dining at Fort George, the three—but especially Ernest and Liliās—spent some inexpressibly pleasant hours, wandering among the pines, breathing their aromatic fragrance and enjoying the shimmer of the golden sun rays on the brown carpet of “needles” below,—listening to the rush of the river, and indulging in the half-dreamy talk of past and present, which such a summer day, with its *dolce far niente*, is so fitted to promote. Liliās got Ernest to read aloud for them the “Ancient Mariner,” which was new to him also, and which he read, as she knew he would do, with his heart in his voice—for which indeed he could find no fitting epithet of admiration, so completely did it chime in with the at once imaginative and reflective tone of his own mind. After it, even the spirited numbers of Scott seemed commonplace, a descent from the lofty mountain tops of spiritual insight, with their rarified atmosphere, to the woods and pastures, fair though they be, of outward material life. The spiritual problems furnished by the poem, with its exquisite close, gave them subjects for a long earnest talk, while the rich warm sunset hues of sky and landscape faded into gray twilight, and the young moon gleamed out from the pale sky above the line of dark forest on the opposite shore.

One thing, by common unexpressed consent, they kept out of their talk as far as possible, so as not to spoil the golden hours as they glided by:—the future, with all its brooding possibilities. As a recognised object of dread,

yet one apparently vague and uncertain, the thought of war, so incredible and so discordant with the outwardly peaceful present, was gladly kept out of sight, that the passing moments, at least, might be enjoyed undisturbed by it. Mrs. McLeod, alone, would put Ernest through the routine of questions with which she persistently plied every visitor, as to what he thought about the prospect of peace or war,—what the Americans would be likely to do first, &c., &c., with regard to all which she never received much satisfaction. Her anxiety generally seemed to culminate in the question what they should do with their plate and valuables in the event of a successful invasion of the frontier.

Marjorie diplomatically and benevolently managed to let Ernest and Lilius have a *tete-a-tete*, while she played and sang to them as they sat in the piazza in the summer twilight. It is not to be denied that they both inwardly enjoyed it, for though they said nothing that Marjorie might not have heard, they could both speak more freely and more confidentially when alone together: especially while the rich plaintive strains of Marjorie's music floated out to them through the open windows, and seemed to break down the barriers of matter-of-fact every-day life, and to attune heart and speech to higher chords. Ernest, freed to some extent from his late reserve, talked a little of himself and his own affairs, and Lilius was glad to find that he was more at rest,—less oppressed by anxiety and

restless longings than when she had last seen him at Oakridge, because he had learned more the secret of laying his burdens on the one heart that can receive the soul's burden and impart strength instead.

About his cousin Rachel he was still anxious, for, from rumours and hints that occasionally reached his ear, he knew more than he cared to tell of Payne's unscrupulousness and of his disposition to prowl about Oakridge. Lilius promised to keep a vigilant watch when she returned, and, if possible, to shield Rachel from his influence, without disturbing her mother's peace.

But Ernest still kept absolute silence upon the subject nearest to his heart,—the feeling of honourable responsibility for his use of the confidence reposed upon him, still sealing his lips. There had grown up, however, insensibly, a deep mutual consciousness, underlying all their intercourse, which would not let them be quite as they once had been, and which almost superseded the need of words. And when Ernest took his leave of the two girls, who had strolled to the gate with him on his departure, his parting clasp of Lilius' hand seemed to tell her all she needed to know.

When they next met, both forgot that each had not had more definite expression of the other's feelings.

CHAPTER VIII.

A RIDE TO NIAGARA FALLS.

"The roar of waters !—from the headlong height
Niagara cleaves the wave-worn precipice,
The fall of waters ! rapid as the light
The flashing wave foams, shaking the abyss.

"There stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we at least alone ;
A truth which through our being then doth melt
And purifies from self !"

JUNE was almost over before the projected excursion to the Falls could be carried out. At last a day arrived when all things favoured the expedition. The morning broke warm and bright, and the party mustered early, that the ride might be accomplished ere the day grew oppressively warm. Captain Percival and the two or three other officers who were to accompany them breakfasted at Dunlathmon. Marjorie, Lillas and Mrs. McLeod had come down to breakfast ready equipped in their riding-habits, with blue veils to protect them from the glare of the sun ; and as soon as the bright, cheerful meal was over, the horses were brought round and the party were quickly mounted. Marjorie never looked so well as when

seated on Oscar—her glossy black steed,—her lithe, well-proportioned figure showing to especial advantage as, with firm seat and steady hand, she controlled the spirited beast, while her cheek took a richer glow and her eye sparkled with a brighter animation. Lillas and she presented an effective contrast; for, if Marjorie lacked her friend's more delicate and regular loveliness, the animation of her bright mobile face, with its greater vividness of colouring, seemed to make ample amends for other deficiencies; and her physical strength and buoyancy seemed a true index of the strength of feeling and character within. Both girls combined with their perfect simplicity of manner a high-bred grace and refinement which were theirs by birthright, and which latter the daughters of the first colonists retained longer than did their brothers, who had to rough it among all kinds of companions. The graceful feminine dignity of bearing, the musically modulated and gentle tones—"an excellent thing in woman"—of both Lillas and Marjorie, unaffected as they were, afforded a striking contrast to the "loud" and familiar manner affected by some modern "girls of the period," which is certainly a descent from the old ideal of womanly grace, and is too suggestive—though sometimes unjustly so—of a lack of real refinement of nature.

Marjorie was in high spirits, although her glee had had a slight check in the news that General Brock could not, as she had ventured to hope, join the party. But

then, it had hardly been expected that he could do so, for the unceasing engagements of his busy life,—especially busy just now,—left but little leisure for private pleasure or relaxation to one, who

“Scorned delights, and lived laborious days.”

However, he had promised to meet them on their return, and accompany them home to dinner in the evening; and the prospect of this was pleasure enough for Marjorie to live on all day. So her brightness and unaffected glee made the life and sunshine of the expedition, as she cantered off briskly, wherever the road would admit of it, playfully challenging her friends to try the speed of their chargers against Oscar, of whom she was very proud, and with whom she was perfectly *en rapport*. Or, when the road would not admit of such rapidity of pace, she chatted gaily with her nearest companion of the moment, making even Percival laugh heartily as she related some amusing instance of the *contretemps* and harmless disasters of primitive bush-life.

The little cavalcade wound down among the picturesque dingles that lie around Queenston Heights, and pursued the shady road that followed pretty closely the windings of the river, as it rushed, strong and vividly green, in its deep rock-hewn chasm below. They drew up for a few minutes beside the whirlpool, to look down into its solemn depths, dark and sombre as a mountain tarn, set

in the midst of dusky pines ; and to trace its giddy whirling eddies, while they tossed down broken branches to be sucked into the circling vortex. It was a spot Marjorie delighted in,—one of her “Ossianic places,” as she called it ; and she loved to construct in fancy a “bower” for her favourite bard, among the overhanging pines.

About a mile farther on, Marjorie called a halt, and commanded Percival to listen attentively.

“Don’t you hear it,” she said :—“the sound of many waters?”

Percival listened ; his ears were not quite so quick as Marjorie’s. But presently he heard it—that indescribable, distant murmur which can only be compared to the voice of the sea when at its grandest—a murmur softer than fairy-bells, yet with an ineffable expression of majesty, power and sublimity—a sound that few who have heard it can easily forget. Even Percival’s usually determinedly impassive face changed and softened as he listened, and a certain quietness came over the mood of the little party as they went on their way.

Niagara Falls, then visited by comparatively few, was looked upon as a greater and more mysterious wonder than now, when it is beheld annually by thousands, who emerge upon its grandeur, fresh from the shriek of the steam whistle ; or catch a passing glimpse of its white surge from the windows of the train, in which they are borne swiftly through the air across the thread-like Sus-

pension Bridge. Many of these, too, when they "visit the Falls," come, not so much for the sake of really seeing and enjoying them, as because they have a vague idea that it is a right and fitting thing to do in certain circumstances. But in those days of tedious and difficult travel, few went out of their way to see the Falls, who were not impelled by a very earnest desire to behold a sight which early travellers had described in language fitted to produce a deep and, perhaps, even exaggerated impression of its awfulness and sublimity; and who thus came with their minds pre-disposed to feelings of awe and veneration, and were, therefore, affected accordingly.

In those days, too, the immediate vicinity of the cataract was not disfigured and vulgarised, as now, by hotels, museums, photograph-galleries and other obtrusive embodiments of the commonplace. Germans would have managed better, had their land been endowed with a Niagara Falls; and would have had nothing, within sight at least, so lamentably out of keeping. But, at that time, the comparatively humble inn was not conspicuously obtrusive amid the surrounding forest, and when the equestrians had left their horses there, and walked on to get a full view of what they had as yet seen only as a veil of white mist glimmering through the intervening trees, they approached the brink of the cataract by a road which still possessed much of the beauty of unspoiled nature.

At last they stood at a point where there was no more

foliage to intercept the view, and had before them the full reach of the great, wide basin, sweeping round in its magnificent curve. Opposite to them rose the rugged, deeply-scarped cliffs of the American shore, crowned with rich, green forest ; then, the white wall of shimmering, ever-shifting foam, lost below in swift ascending clouds of shadowy spray ; next, the shady bosquets of Goat Island, set like an emerald among the boiling surges ; and then the black, foam-sprinkled rocks and the great curve of the Horse-Shoe Fall. In the bright summer sunshine, its central waters gleamed in their purest, most pellucid green, flecked with tossing wreaths of snowy foam ; at its feet boiled a chaos of spray and seething foam, from which constantly ascended the white vapoury veil that sometimes concealed altogether the green depths behind, and on which, as the sunbeams pierced its edge, rested the brilliant Iris, the bow of peace. Far down below, the turbulent river, boiling and tossing, rushed foaming along, to grow somewhat calmer as it filled the full width of the basin, and then, contracting between narrower banks, to become a deep intense green, with almost the apparent solidity of malachite—this illusion being increased by its being seemingly caked and cracked into masses separated by white veins of foam, caused by hidden rocks and shallows.

The little party stood for a good while absorbed in silently contemplating the scene before them, which,

whether one beholds it for the first or the hundredth time, takes despotic possession of the whole being, with a fascination as resistless as its own mighty surge, while the great, unceasing, overpowering "sound of many waters" seems to pervade and overflow every avenue of consciousness,—to fill far more than the mere sense of hearing. Majorie forgot, for a time, the existence not only of the companions around her, but of everything else in the world except this one majestic presence, seeming almost an independent existence; or, to speak more truly, so forcible a manifestation of the Eternal Being who originates and maintains all things, whose "pavilion round about Him are dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." Percival, for the time, felt his ordinarily careless mood subdued and solemnised by the irresistible sense of a Presence of which he usually thought but little; and, in the confused maze of thought which the impressions of sight and sound seemed to evoke, there glimmered before him a sort of higher ideal of himself, an image, as it were, of the being he was meant to be, and might be yet, if he would. Liliat, too, felt strongly the intense fascination; though, unlike Marjorie, she had not lost in it the feeling of all other things, but was keenly sensible of a strong undertone of regret that Ernest, who would enjoy this so intensely, should not be here to share the delight with her. She knew he had often seen it, for he thought nothing of the fifteen-mile walk from Newark, on a holiday, to secure

a few hours there ; but they had never been there together, and she felt, rather than thought, how much this would have enhanced the enjoyment to both. But, as she looked and listened, the regret seemed to fade away in a blissful dreamlike feeling, in which, not only did she seem lifted nearer the Invisible Source of Love as well as of Power, but seemed to have as close a fellowship with Ernest as though he were by her side.

But the stiller of intense feeling of any kind can never last long with our composite mortal organizations, and the silent mood of most of the party was at length broken in upon by Colonel McLand—acted as generalissimo—declaring, in his sonorous Highland tones, that it was high time they had something to eat after their long ride. This hint was followed by the appearance of a substantial array of sandwiches, biscuits and ale, ordered down from the inn, which the excursionists, throwing themselves down on the grass, in the most comfortable attitudes they could find, incontinently proceeded to discuss. Marjorie was the hardest to awaken from her trance ; but, when once aroused, she became, by a sudden reaction, the merriest of the party, declaring that she found herself ravenously hungry, and that mortals, however they might delight in the beautiful and sublime, could not, in the meantime, live upon it. Lillas, who could not change her mood so easily and was much less disposed to talk, found it a burden to answer Captain Percival ; even though he was

speaking, with an earnestness not usual with him, of his impressions of the wonderful sight before them; and she felt the merriment of the party generally, rather oppressive in those particular circumstances. She would gladly have been alone—or better—alone with Ernest, free to talk, or not to talk, as she liked;—enjoying the communion of silence, which only those whose natures thoroughly harmonize with each other can share.

Luncheon over, the little party scattered in various directions—the elders preferring to rest, while the Major, Colonel McLeod, and one or two of the senior officers enjoyed, at the same time, their “whiff” of fragrant tobacco. Percival, and a young lieutenant named Grant, who was an especial admirer of Marjorie’s, sauntered slowly up the river bank with the two girls, watching the wildly tossing rapids as they dashed and tumbled along, now flowing down a slope with a deceitful oily smoothness, and then leaping high into the air, tossing their snowy crests in seeming fury as some unseen rock opposed their progress. They walked on to the spot, about a mile above the Falls, where, perhaps, the rapids are finest, where they show their grandest slope and dash, foaming over innumerable black ledges of rock, in as many tiny cascades, each worthy of admiration and study as a miniature cataract. Everywhere the same ceaseless untiring rush; the same hurrying flow of water, knowing no more ebb or stay than time itself, making the beholder wonder when the madly

surging tide will be spent by the very force of its own violence,—whence comes the mighty inexhaustible supply that keeps its flood-gates full ; and filling up the whole being with the one idea of rush and motion.

None of the party talked much ; the young lieutenant, who might have waxed loquacious had he received encouragement, being rather repressed by the more silent mood of his companions. The walk would have been an oppressively hot one, at that hour, but for the shade of the tall trees which overhung the path during the whole way. But the mosquitoes, which haunted the moist ground they were passing over, made such good use of their opportunities, that Percival was fain to swallow down a muttered execration, and to declare that sight-seeing in Canada was certainly subject to pains and penalties.

After strolling slowly back, Marjorie and Liliat sat down to rest on Table Rock, while the young men performed the feat, possible only to the stronger sex in those days, of climbing down the face of the cliff to the ledge below by means of a rough Indian ladder,—a huge hemlock with branches partially cut off,—which was then the only means of descent. It had been honoured, however, by being used by a royal prince, on the occasion of the Duke of Kent's visit to Niagara ; and what the rude stair lacked in ease and safety, it made up in the excitement and hazard of the descent. The young men enjoyed it,—enjoyed, too, the cooling drenching they got from the

spray, as they stood below, and the magnificence of the spectacle above them,—the massive descending column of water, the wreathing clouds of spray and vapour,—while the girls above marked their progress by their receding voices, and, when all was still, waited somewhat anxiously for their re-appearance. They did re-appear at last, flushed, excited and triumphant, and assuring their companions that it was “magnificent, glorious,” down there; that, “in fact, you could have no conception of what the Falls really were till you had seen them from below!” Captain Percival was really for once excited and enthusiastic; and Marjorie declared to Liliás, *sotto voce*, as they still lingered a little on the rock, that it was almost as well worth seeing as the Falls, to have ocular demonstration that he *could* be so stirred.

“Do you notice how handsome it makes him?” she asked Liliás,—“with that flush, and his eyes gleaming out so brilliantly! He really looks almost like the Prince in the fairy tales. I should fancy he would look just like that when leading his men into action. Come, Liliás,” she added, a little mischievously, “confess,—isn’t he far handsomer than Ernest Heathcote?”

But Liliás would not confess anything of the kind; for to her eye Ernest was the handsomer of the two. However, she admitted that he was looking very well, and enjoyed watching his fine face, so unusually brightened by animation, as she would have admired a picture.

The young men were waiting for them a little way off but the girls could hardly tear themselves away from their fascinating post of observation. Then Marjorie insisted on going up once more to the very brink of the Falls, and standing as close as was possible to the headlong tide. At last she grasped Liliias' arm with a nervous shudder, and exclaimed:—"Come away! That strange feeling is coming over me! If I don't go away at once, I shall throw myself over!"

And, clinging fast to Liliias, who was not unaccustomed to such manifestations of the excitable temperament of her friend, she willingly turned away from the fascination that was becoming too strong, and they rejoined the rest of the party.

Meantime, unobserved by them, the day had been growing more sultry, the air had become absolutely still, and an ominous deep blue cloud had risen rapidly above the horizon, and was already beginning to darken the sky. They found the others scanning the aspect of things rather anxiously.

"We're in for a thunder-storm, that's certain," said Colonel McLeod, who was a capital weather-gauge, "and it's no use to think of getting home before it comes. So the best thing we can all do is to get under shelter at the inn, and wait till it's over. And there's no time to lose, for it will be down directly!"

Taking the Colonel's advice, all hastened to the inn,

while, even as they went, the cloud increased rapidly, expanding into ragged-edged black fragments that spread themselves over the sky, and taking strange lurid lights on its upper masses. Hardly were they well under shelter before, simultaneously with the peal of thunder that followed the first flash of lightning, came down the heavy, pattering drops, which soon became a rushing, lashing shower.

The room of which they took possession at the inn was a good-sized, somewhat bare apartment, with windows opening out on a wide upper piazza, supported by tall hemlock pillars, rising to meet the roof. Here, while sheltered from the force of the storm, they could enjoy the grandeur of its effects, and could catch a glimpse of the river, and of the upper portion of the Horse-Shoe Fall, whose pure, transparent green had changed into dusky brownish grey, now that the storm had obscured the sunshine and churned up the sediment from below into its usually clear stream. The storm would evidently soon exhaust itself, and, in the meantime, Marjorie and Liliias, at any rate, intensely enjoyed watching it wreak its fury; the woods without bending and swaying beneath the force of the wind and dashing rain, and the jagged flashes of lightning darting from the dark clouds, while the long, rolling peals of thunder, harmonizing grandly with the hollow roar of the Falls, were yet not so long or so close as to alarm them. At last the sky began to grow clearer,

the wind lulled, the lightning ceased, the violence of the rain abated, and, in an incredibly short time, the sun broke out, re-asserting its power, and dispersing the clouds, while the dripping foliage sparkled with a thousand brilliants in the glowing sunshine.

As a good deal of time had been necessarily lost by the delay, the horses were ordered out at once, and the party were soon remounted for the homeward ride, for which, now that the air had been cleared and refreshed by the storm, both horses and riders felt much more spirit. The roads, which the rain had covered with streams of water, were drying fast under the influence of the warm sunshine, and the woods around them seemed to be rejoicing after their bath, and to wear a fresher, tenderer, more vivid green.

CHAPTER IX.

SUDDEN TIDINGS.

"Alas, must war again begin,
And must men fight and die?"

"I wis, in all the Senate
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat
When that ill news was told!"

IF Liliás could have had Ernest Heathcote for a companion on the homeward ride, it would have seemed to her, in the renewed beauty of the hour, almost like a ride through the garden of Eden. As it was, Captain Percival took care to keep his place beside her, and being himself in an unusually animated mood, he succeeded in drawing her out of the partial abstraction which she had allowed to creep over her in the early part of the day. They were, indeed, chatting very pleasantly, and "getting on" unusually well, when Marjorie threw a chance, or perhaps a mischievous missile, into the midst of their talk. Percival asked how Liliás liked the volumes of poetry he had sent her, and she was very heartily expressing her admiration, when Marjorie, who was just in front, looked round, exclaiming:

"Oh, *I* was so much obliged to you, too, Captain Percival! I don't know when I have read anything I enjoyed so much!—especially 'The Ancient Mariner!' Ernest Heathcote read it aloud to us the other evening, and he reads so beautifully that we enjoyed it doubly."

Captain Percival bit his lip, and perhaps the colour on his cheek glowed a little more deeply.

"Oh, indeed!" he said, "I wasn't aware that Mr. Heathcote was an elocutionist as well as a schoolmaster. I suppose he teaches his 'young ideas' to declaim

'My name is Norval, on the Grampian hills!'

There was a sneer in the tone as well as in the words. Lilius flushed a little, but made no reply; only drew herself up more stiffly in her saddle. Captain Percival must have seen her annoyance, and perhaps it exasperated him a little. He continued after a short silence:

"There are some not very creditable rumours afloat about this black swan of yours, Miss Meredith."

"Indeed!" Lilius replied, in a tone so determinedly calm and indifferent as to completely belie the heart which the words had set wildly beating beneath.

"Yes," replied Percival, somewhat aggravated by her tone, "they talk of him as a half Yankee, which I believe he is, and say that he's playing double, having too much to do with the Yankee spies and sedition-hatchers that are hanging about."

"Then I am sure they slander him most wickedly!" exclaimed Lillas, surprised this time into some vehemence of manner. "There is no man in Canada, I am certain, more truly loyal than Mr. Heathcote!"

"Well, I only repeat what I have heard," said Percival, with aggravating nonchalance. "You know the old saying, 'where there's smoke there's fire.' But Mr. Heathcote is fortunate in his friends! When *my* character is assailed, I hope I may be as ably and warmly defended!"

Lillas, in no wise propitiated by the conclusion of this speech, vouchsafed no reply. Almost immediately afterwards, a diversion was caused by their meeting General Brock, mounted on his grey horse "Alfred," near Queenston Heights, where he had been reconnoitring with some of his staff; and she managed to change her companion in the general disarrangement that took place, taking care to prevent Captain Percival from regaining his post by her side. If he suffered in any wise by this proceeding, it added another to the little accumulation of grudges which had been growing up in his mind against Ernest Heathcote.

At General Brock's suggestion, they made a little *detour* in order to ascend Queenston Heights and enjoy the view from thence. The ascent was pretty rugged, but, once on the brow of the Heights, the scene that lay spread before them was fair enough to repay the trouble; although, from the almost unbroken monotony of the ex-

tensive forests around them, it presented much less variety of beauty than the same view does now. The opposite banks, indeed, showed a good many traces of settlement and cultivation, and the scattered hamlet of Queenston straggled around the Heights; while here and there a clearing, with its house or "shanty," might be seen. But far to westward stretched almost unbroken masses of forest for thousands of miles, where now it is replaced by the houses and spires of many a town and village, a network of railways, and many a fertile field and orchard. Just below them, the same as now in all essential features, flowed the river, green and rapid in its narrow channel,—long since spanned by a suspension bridge,—and winding away between high, steep, or sloping banks to the distant, soft blue lake, Fort George and Fort Niagara frowning across at each other at its mouth. In the opposite direction, a white cloud of mist, brooding over one point of the high table-land that trended away to the westward, indicated the spot where the forest hid in its bosom the mighty cataract. The whole scene, lying bathed in the soft rays of the afternoon sunshine,—one or two light clouds making fine effects of light and shade in the picture,—looked so sylvan, so peaceful, so secluded from the world of action, that it would have seemed impossible to associate it with scenes of war and bloodshed. Yet, when some of the party next met on that spot, it was amid the clash of arms and the rattle of musketry;—man

dyeing, with the blood of his brother man, the fair innocent ferns and green forest leaves, and leaving a sad though a noble, memory to the place for ever.

General Brock was, according to his wont, scanning every feature of the situation with his keen, military eye, and remarking in a low voice to the officers about him its characteristics. "A splendid position this would be," he said, "to hold against an assailing enemy; and a desperate place to lead up a forlorn hope, if the enemy were entrenched here. There would be some rough work on both sides, in either case,"—he added, looking thoughtfully down at the steep, jagged, precipitous rocks which were, indeed, to be the scene of "rough work," ere many weeks had passed. Majorie eagerly caught up what was said; everything connected with the war or warlike operations was intensely interesting to her, and, much as she dreaded it, her spirit rose at any allusion to it, with a thrill of excitement which was not altogether painful. As for Lilius, she was too much absorbed in the ideas which Percival's remarks had called up,—anxiety about the rumours he had mentioned, and their effect upon Ernest's comfort and prospects,—to take much heed of what, at another time would have had a strong, though painful interest for her. It was with no small effort that she managed to attend sufficiently to her companion's not very interesting talk on the way home, to put in the expected replies at the proper places, and to prevent their being noticeably irrelevant.

As the party rode up to the house at Dunlathmon, a tall, stalwart figure, strongly built, and firm and light of limb, clad in a rough serviceable suit, which did not, however, hide a thoroughly gentleman-like bearing, emerged from the portico and came rapidly to meet them.

"Talbot! as I live!" exclaimed Colonel McLeod, springing from his saddle to give the stranger a hearty grasp of the hand. "Why, what wind blew you here from your wigwam?"

"You may well ask that," replied the other, "for the wind *did* blow me here a little faster than I should otherwise have come! The storm overtook me, and my beast and I got a pretty good ducking before I could reach the shelter of your hospitable roof; and here I've been walking about in the sun drying myself, and waiting your return with what patience I could muster."

"Well, you're thoroughly welcome, my good fellow! I only wish you'd let us see you a little oftener;"—and when the stranger had paid his respects to the ladies and shaken hands with Major Meredith, he was introduced to General Brock and the rest of the party, as "Colonel Talbot." General Brock greeted the Colonel most cordially, saying that, though he had never met him before, he had often wished to do so,—to which Colonel Talbot responded, with bluff heartiness, that he was the very man whom at present he most wanted to see, as he wished to find out what possibilities of assistance he might have, in case

those "rascally Yankees" should, as he had heard they had some intention of doing, make a raid upon his distant and prosperous settlement.

Leaving the gentlemen to discuss politics and possibilities of attack, on the verandah, the ladies, accompanied by Flora, who had been left at home to help Dinah, and look after her brothers' comfort, retired to change their dresses with all convenient despatch. For the dinner, which Dinah had been busy all day in preparing, that it might be sumptuous enough for the occasion, was, as she declared, "spilin' itself waitin' ;" and, shifting her *role* from head-cook to ladies' maid, she came up to help her young ladies to "get into their finery" as speedily as possible. She was very proud of them when they were ready, and declared that they looked "jest like two new-blown roses." Both Marjorie and Lillas, indeed, showed some traces, in their heightened colour, of the day's exposure to the sun ; but to the rather pale complexion of Lillas this was an improvement, while Marjorie's dark complexion also looked all the better for the glow that gave it an added brightness. Both girls wore white evening-dresses, for Colonel McLeod liked to keep up a little of the pomp and circumstance of old-country customs on special occasions. Lillas was most becomingly attired in the "sprigged muslin," with its delicate embroidery and Flanders lace, of which mention has been made before,—its whiteness relieved by a rich blue sash ; while Marjorie had some-

what fantastically brightened up her plainer India muslin, destitute of modern "protrusive disguises," with a silk scarf of McLeod tartan, thrown over one shoulder and knotted at the other side below her waist. Flora, excited and eager, looked very pretty in her simple white muslin and pink ribbons. As the three girls—having first taken a look into the dining-room to see that the table arrangements were all right, and that Flora's vases of flowers were properly placed,—entered the drawing-room, where the gentlemen had now assembled, they made a prettily-contrasted group,—a vision radiant enough, at least, to disturb the somewhat earnest conversation which had been going on before their entrance, and, for the time, to turn talk and ideas into a different channel.

As there were still a few minutes to wait for Mrs. McLeod, who was always slow in her movements, Captain Percival seized the opportunity to come to Marjorie for information about the new comer, who,—still of course in the rough attire in which he had come,—was eagerly talking with General Brock and Colonel McLeod,—his rough, careless dress presenting a curious contrast to the faultless attire of the General and to the high-collared blue coat with bright buttons, which had been Colonel McLeod's well-preserved dress suit for many a day.

"Do tell me who that 'stranger' is, as your Yankee neighbours say," said Captain Percival. "He looks like a thorough gentleman, notwithstanding his rough exterior."

"And he *is* a thorough gentleman!" said Marjorie; "and a most independent gentleman, of very extensive accomplishments! Did you ever read of a gentleman and a basket-maker who were cast ashore on a desert island, among savages; and the basket-maker turned 'boss,' as the people here call it, and not only saved the poor gentleman's life by his skill, but finally took him as an apprentice in basket-making? Well, Colonel Talbot could have done basket-maker as well as gentleman. He can fell trees, plough and sow, reap, milk, churn, cook, wash, brew, bake bread, and clean his own boots!"

Captain Percival raised his eyebrows slightly and said, with mock humility:—"Your Highness is pleased to jest with your humble servant."

"Not at all, I assure you! He not only can do, but has done all these things, and, moreover, besides all this, he performs all the marriage ceremonies in the settlement."

"Has he practised on himself then, in that line?"

"No," said Marjorie, smiling, "I believe he doesn't care to have a woman about him, not even a female servant. People say that it was a love disappointment that brought him to bury himself in the woods; but I don't know whether there's anything in that! It was, I believe, thought very odd that he should leave the army and society, (he's of a noble family, you know), and should choose to come and live in the woods with none to speak to

but the Indians and the rough men who helped him to clear his land. But he seems to like it. He's been there ten years now, and he very seldom comes even as far as this. It's more than two years since he has been here before, although my father is one of his most intimate friends, and goes to see him about once a year."

"How did he come to take up the idea?" asked Percival, interested in the singular phenomenon.

"Oh, he first came out with Governor Simcoe as his aid-de-camp, about twenty years ago ; and went with him on a surveying expedition all through the great western district when Governor Simcoe was looking about for a site for a new capital. So he took a fancy to found a colony in the great wilderness, on the shore of Lake Erie, where there were then only a few wandering Indians. He says he believes what first put it into his head to come, was his reading in Charlevoix that that country was the paradise of the Hurons, and, as he was determined to get to Paradise by hook or crook, he came. But at any rate he resolved to found a colony, and he has done it, through tremendous difficulties and hardships. He has cleared farms, cut roads, and settled numbers of emigrants, and he reigns as a sort of king among them, in his log palace on the cliff. Indeed, I believe he's a regular despot, although he has a great deal of generosity and kindness of heart. It's about ten years now, since he first took possession of a grant of a hundred thousand acres that he got

from the Home Government, and my father says it's wonderful what a change he has made since then."

"Why, it sounds like one of the old stories I used to read as a boy! I didn't know you had such adventurous paladins out here," said Percival, both amused and interested by the recital, "I must see if I can get him to tell me some of his experience by and by."

"I have no doubt he will, if you show him proper respect;" replied Marjorie, gravely. "Remember he is used to a great deal of deference in every one he meets."

"Thank you, I shall remember your hint. May I have the honour of taking you in to dinner?"

For Mrs. McLeod had made her appearance by this time, and the move to the dining-room had begun. Colonel McLeod, of course, offered his arm to Liliás, and General Brock followed with his hostess. Percival found himself almost opposite to Liliás, but the position was of little use to him, as he could rarely manage even to catch her eye. For Colonel Talbot, who sat on her right hand, and who could wear even a courtly grace when he pleased, in talking with ladies, seemed willing to take full advantage of his present privilege,—so great a contrast to the voluntary isolation of his ordinary life; and managed to carry on a lively conversation with her and Flora, in the intervals of the more earnest talk that circulated at the table. In these circumstances, Percival consoled himself as well as he could by watching the peculiarities of this remarkable

man, in whose history he had become a good deal interested.

Colonel McLeod, as usual, did the honours of the table with the dignified Highland courtesy for which he was noted even in that age of old-fashioned politeness, beside which our modern manners often seem rough and careless. He was, himself, a distinguished-looking man, and the rest of the party were a very favourable representation of the best colonial society of the time. But the honoured guest of the evening was, of course, General Brock, whom all, by unexpressed consent, united in treating with special deference, and whose commanding, graceful figure, and calm noble face conferred on him a natural distinction and pre-eminence; although his own gently courteous manner, unaffected modesty and simplicity of bearing seemed to ignore any pretension of the kind. Such careless observers, indeed, as are in the habit of associating assumption with power, would hardly have imagined that this man, so nobly simple in his mien, held in his hands the destinies of a province. Yet, though as yet hardly bearing the marks even of middle age, he had already bravely served his country in the West Indies, in Holland and in Denmark, and had been called, not to the military administration only, but also to preside for a time over the government of a colony which he had found divided, and to some extent disaffected, by injudicious management; but to which his wise and firm rule, free

from party bias and interest, seeking with enlightened zeal the union and prosperity of the Province, had restored order, harmony and hearty co-operation. And now that a threatened storm was lowering around them, thousands of peaceful people, scattered through an almost defenceless territory, were looking to him as the guardian hero who would safely pilot them through a crisis so fraught with imminent peril to life, to property, and to interests dearer than life itself.

But General Brock was far too much occupied with the duties and responsibilities that lay upon him, to have any room in his mind for thoughts of his own consequence,—too much absorbed by his anxiety to do his duty well and faithfully, to dwell upon the thought that *he* was the man called to a work of no ordinary responsibility and importance. When, as now, the prospects of the war became the theme of conversation, it was his habit rather to listen than to talk ;—to receive the ideas and suggestions of others, rather than to express his own sentiments ;—not so much from any intended reticence, as from a desire to learn all that could be learned on the subject under consideration ; and in this way he often gleaned most valuable information.

From the threatened war at home to the existing one abroad, was a natural transition ; and Captain Percival, as the latest arrival, was plied with questions concerning the Peninsular campaign, in which he had several friends

and comrades engaged. Colonel Talbot was the only man at the table who seemed to care nothing about it, in whom even Ciudad-Rodrigo awakened little or no interest. He had long, by force of the habit of isolation, settled down into an almost total indifference as to the course of European events, in one of the most stirring periods of European history. His ambition as a soldier, his home sympathies, had, in the pursuit of his one absorbing idea, almost faded away; and Canada, and, above all, his own little territory, blotted out to his mental vision the whole world outside. But when Canadian politics were touched upon, when his favorite theme—British mismanagement of Canadian affairs—was alluded to, he became all alive at once, and brought a shade of redoubled gravity to General Brock's earnest, thoughtful countenance, by relating, with great animation, one of his favourite anecdotes in reference to the blunder which he believed had been made in the cession of Detroit and large tracts of the adjoining territory to the Americans.

"Why," said he, "I was talking one day with one of the English Commissioners, and I just took the map and showed him the foolish bargain they had made, and the extent and value and resources of the ceded territory. When the light did break in upon him at last, the man covered his eyes with his hands and fairly burst into tears!"

But the conversation soon passed to pleasanter sub-

jects, for the dinner had reached the stage when men prefer to avoid painful thoughts and topics. As the soft rays of the fast descending sun stole in through the western windows, penetrating the dusky pines with long lines of golden light, and seeming to bring with them the sweet pine odours, while the guests enjoyed the mellow flavour of Colonel McLeod's old wine,—brought from home and reserved for special occasions,—the talk drifted away to the memories of the dear old land, so dear and so close, despite all official delinquencies, to every true colonist's heart. Major Meredith and Colonel McLeod had each their memories of "merrie England" and "bonnie Scotland," which seldom found expression except on some such occasion as this; and then Colonel McLeod, as he often did at such times, reverted to his favourite poet, "the Harp of Cona," through whose strains still comes down the wailing voice of the wind sighing on the heath-clad hill-side, breathing the lament for departed beauty or fallen valour. He was soon in the midst of an eager discussion as to the genuineness of the poems, warmly defending the affirmative, and praising their power and beauty.

"Where," he said, "will you find a finer expression of the thought than this, in almost the closing lines?"

He repeated, first in Gaelic and then in English, in tones whose sonorous cadences fitted well the simple majesty of the words, the following passage: "The

chiefs of other times are departed. They have gone without their fame ! The sons of future years shall pass away. Another race shall arise. The people are like the waves of ocean, like the leaves of the woody Morven, they pass away in the rustling blast, and other leaves lift their green heads on high !”

Just as he uttered these concluding words the tramp of two horses was heard rapidly galloping up the avenue to the door. Somehow, the sound seemed to indicate hasty tidings ; and this idea was confirmed when black Cæsar appeared to say that Colonel McDonell—General Brock’s Aid-de-camp—and another gentleman, wished to speak with the General. He rose at once and left the room, and an expectant stillness crept over the party during his absence, which lasted for a considerable time. No one seemed able to start a new subject or continue an old one, except Mrs. McLeod, who talked on to her neighbours unflaggingly in her soft mixture of West Indian languor and vivacity.

At last the door opened, and General Brock entered alone, paler than when he had left the room, as if touched by some recent emotion, and grave with the look of responsibility which every thoughtful man must wear when called to act in some new and momentous crisis, even though it may have been expected and prepared for. He stood for a moment silent, his hand resting on the back of his chair, the last rays of the setting sun lighting up his

moved but calm and resolute face ; and it was with a solemn impressiveness of voice that told how deeply he felt the weighty import of the tidings he had to communicate —tidings which he knew had their special and intense interest for each one who heard him—that he said, at last, in low but distinct tones that thrilled through the stilness of every expectant ear :—" I have just had private intelligence from Washington? *War was declared there on the eighteenth!*"

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CHAPTER X.

TO ARMS !

"The harvests of Arretium
 This year, old men shall reap ;
 This year, young boys in Umbro
 Shall plunge the struggling sheep ;
 And in the vats of Luna
 This year, the must shall foam
 Round the white feet of laughing girls
 Whose sires have marched to Rome !"

IT is as unnecessary as it would be impossible to describe the varied emotions which General Brock's communication excited in the minds of those who heard it. Such a crisis, involving an upheaval of the general order and stability of things,—so many possibilities which the mind almost refuses to receive,—always comes, however long it may have been expected, with a certain shock and suddenness, and a stunned difficulty of realization, somewhat like that which attends death itself. The momentary silence that succeeded the announcement was soon broken by exclamations of various kinds, and expressions of condemnation of the American Government, more or less strong according to the temper of the individuals from whom they emanated. American writers of the present day assert, supported by Jefferson's own letters, that he, at least, so

long as he remained in office, had done all in his power to restrain the "torrent of passion" that was directed toward war, and to bring in "another umpire than that of arms," *i. e.* the embargo; that he had been firm and sincere in warding off war as long as possible,—only desiring that, if it *must* come, it should come at a time "when England has a Bonaparte upon her hands." But the Canadians at that time did not see it exactly in this light. To them,—and even to such keen and careful observers as General Brock,*—it had seemed that, so far back as 1808, the American Government had been scheming to provoke a war which, as regarded Canada, appeared to them the wanton and rapacious invasion of an unoffending country at a time when their natural protector was crippled in her

* The following passages, extracted from letters of Jefferson and General Brock, will show how differently the same things appear from different points of view :—

Jefferson (in 1812).

"If ever I was gratified with the possession of power, and of the confidence of those who had entrusted me with it, it was on that occasion when I was enabled to use both for the prevention of war, toward which the torrent of passion was directed almost irresistibly, and when not another person in the United States less supported by authority and favour could have resisted it."

General Brock (in 1808).

"We have completely outwitted Jefferson, and all his schemes to provoke us to war. He had no other object in view in issuing his restrictive proclamation; but failing in that, he tried what the embargo would produce, and in this he has been foiled again. Certainly our Administration is deserving of every praise for their policy on these occasions. Jefferson and his party, however strong the inclination, dare not declare war, and therefore they endeavour to attain their object by every provocation;" &c.

power to aid them by hostilities at home. When, therefore, the declaration of war by Congress was really placed beyond a doubt, it seemed to them only the climax of a long continued policy,—especially marked in President Madison—designed to aggravate hostile feelings and to excite the popular mind to the point of invasion. And it can scarcely be wondered at that those who had to bear the brunt of the contest without having done anything to provoke it,—who saw their peaceful homes exposed to be ravaged by a formidable enemy close at hand, without almost a reasonable hope of effectual defence, should at times have found it impossible to repress the tide of indignant feeling and bitter words.

The ladies took the first opportunity of retiring from the dining-room and leaving the gentlemen to what naturally resolved itself into an informal council of war. Possibilities and plans of operation were discussed with much eagerness ;—Colonel McLeod and Major Meredith rousing up at the defiant prospect of real action, as an old war-horse does at the sound of the bugle-call. Meantime Mrs. McLeod sat in the drawing-room with Flora, her rich, stiff damask disposed in graceful folds, on which her eye complacently rested while, with languid loquacity, she lamented the situation to Dinah, who had come up eager to hear what the sudden news had been. Marjorie and Lillias wandered up and down in the bright moonlight without, talking occasionally in under tones, but, for the

most part, thinking silently of possibilities that had long dimly floated before their minds, but now seemed to menace, so much more closely and definitely, the welfare of their nearest and dearest. Marjorie's thoughts were too much engrossed with her hero, on whom lay the load of responsibility,—the necessity for instant action,—to think much of the more personal aspects of the impending conflict. But Lilius was thinking of her father, who, she knew, would rush foremost into the danger with all the English heartiness and fearlessness of his nature ; and of Ernest, with enemies, as it seemed, on all sides of him, and before him the serious chances of war, in the faithful discharge of the duties to which he would assuredly be called, and from which, she knew, and was glad to know, he would not shrink.

They went into the drawing-room at last ; and to divert Mrs. McLeod from the gloomy forebodings in which it seemed to give her a sort of pleasure to indulge, Marjorie sat down to the small, old-fashioned piano, a rare luxury in Canada in those days, and sang one of her father's favourite Jacobite songs, vibrating with the thrill of national enthusiasm and devotion, yet with the sadness of a hopeless cause underlying its plaintive chords. The music seemed to act as an attracting force, for in a short time the gentlemen entered the room, and Col. McLeod, who was very proud of his daughter's voice and of the enthusiasm and feeling with which she sang, charged

Marjorie to sing some of her best songs for the General, who had not long to stay, and wanted some music before he left. General Brock himself courteously and heartily endorsed the request, and took his station beside the piano, looking down with kindly admiration on the expressive face of the young singer, changing with the changing emotions of her music, until the music itself seemed to transport him into a different sphere, almost beyond the consciousness of what was passing around him. He asked for the "Flowers of the Forest," one of his favourites. Marjorie would rather not have sung that to-night ;—it touched too painfully chords that were just then most tensely strung. But she would have made a much greater sacrifice of feeling to gratify any wish that General Brock might have expressed, so she sang it steadily through, though her voice would waver a little on the words—

"Dule and wae for the order sent our lads to the border,"
and it was with a more plaintive sadness than usual that she brought out the pathetic refrain—

"For the Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away !"

Scarcely allowing herself a pause for thanks, however, she passed quickly to another song, not so old or so hackneyed then as it is now, in which her voice rang out with the martial ardour worthy of a daughter of the McLeods, in the immortal strain,—

"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed—
Or to Victory !"

Every one in the room felt the electric influence of the words and the music, thrilling at any time, but doubly so in the peculiar circumstances of the moment ; and when the last resolute notes of the closing line—

“ Let us do or die ! ”—

sank into silence, a perfect storm of applause rewarded the fair singer, of which General Brock's bright beaming smile of approval was of course the most appreciated token.

“ And now,” said he gently “ as I shall have to go almost immediately, may I beg for my favourite song as the last,—“ The Land o' the Leal ? ”

It is a remarkable instance of the varying adaptability of the same musical notes, that the air of “ Scots wha hae,” so expressive of ardent, resolute courage and devotion,—when sung more slowly and differently accentuated, expresses so beautifully the longings of a soul—done with this world and at rest concerning its future—for the more lasting joys and unbroken peace of the “ Land o' the Leal.” The exquisite song, sung by Marjorie in subdued tones, but with distinct utterance and true feeling, seemed, after the other, like the peace of heaven poured upon the troubled waters of earth. General Brock seemed to feel it so, as he stood by with folded arms, his calm eye fixed in its gaze, as if piercing through the shifting clouds of “ things seen and temporal ” to the far blue, unchanging, eternal heaven beyond.

When the song was finished he expressed his thanks,

and, accompanied by the members of his staff who were present, took his leave. Captain Percival and the others, who were bound for Fort George, quickly followed in his suite; Major Meredith, Colonel McLeod and Colonel Talbot promising to ride over to Newark early next day. Marjorie waited only till they were gone, and then made a hasty escape to her own room, where Liliias found her weeping bitterly. The strain of excited feeling of the last hour or two, and of singing those songs in her painfully wrought-up mood, as well as the burden of a strange presentiment that was weighing on her spirit, found their natural reaction now. Liliias was sorely inclined to join her; but restrained herself, and soothed her friend's agitation with words of comfort that she was far from feeling herself; and in a short time Marjorie, by one of her rapid changes of feeling, had become by far the more cheerful of the two. It was long, that night, before either of the girls slept, and when they did at last fall into a broken slumber, it was to meet troubled dreams, bearing some grotesque resemblance to the ideas that had been haunting their waking thoughts.

Dunlathmon was not the only place to which that sudden news brought trouble and consternation. As the tidings of the declaration of war spread rapidly through the Province, it fell on the hearts of the colonists like a thunderbolt, startling them out of the even tenor of their way, and turning all their ideas, feelings and energies into a new and absorbing channel.

When on the 12th of July, 1812, General Hull invaded Canadian territory, he issued a bombastic proclamation, in which, after alluding to the "tyranny and injustice of Great Britain," and expatiating upon the invaluable blessings of civil, political and religious liberty which he offered to the Canadians, he promised them,—should they make no resistance,—to "emancipate them from tyranny and oppression, and restore them to the dignified station of freemen."* He declared, however, that if resistance were offered, and if Indians were allowed to participate in that resistance, no quarter would be given, but the war would become a war of extermination. He then placed an alternative before them, in the following terms :—"The United States offer you peace, liberty and security. Your choice lies between these and war, slavery and destruction." And they who then rejected the first of these alternatives knew well that a most serious crisis was impending,—that they were entering on a contest which might be long, bloody and destructive, and whose success was, at best, extremely doubtful.

It was a tremendous bribe that they were offered—peace, comfort, security, undisturbed possession of all that

* (NOTE.)—It should not be forgotten that the war was forced on mainly by the *slave-holding* States, the vote in Congress being seventy-nine to forty-nine,—the advocates of the war being chiefly from the *Southern and Western* States, while its opponents were from the *North and East*. This circumstance should have been remembered in Britain during the late American war.

made up their outward life, the price being only the sacrifice of their conscientious convictions of honour, loyalty and duty. The issue was not, as we see it, clear and decided, but doubtful and dark. The present was full of depression and anxiety,—the future uncertain, trembling in the balance, and full of terrible possibilities. They had a powerful enemy at their doors, while the friend to whom they looked for succour was herself embarrassed by other contests, and separated from them by thousands of miles of stormy ocean, in days when steam ocean-navigation was as yet a Utopian dream. Among them was a comparative handful of soldiers to lead their defence, while a formidable army was ready to close around them, without, as it seemed, any reasonable hope of adequate resistance. On the one hand was the promise of tranquil, undisturbed possession of their hardly-won homes and their laboriously tilled fields, if they should remain passive: on the other, the too certain prospect of ruinous warfare, devastation, carnage, deadly peril,—of all that makes an invasion terrible, should they firmly take their stand for what they believed the right! They might have been excused for wavering; but they did not waver. "*Fiat justitia ruat cælum*," was their motto. May the Canada of the future prove a worthy descendant of this young Canada of the past!

From the first, with a very few insignificant exceptions, there was no uncertain sound in the loyalty of the people.

In town, village, and sparsely populated townships, the staunch Canadians rose as one man, determined, at all hazards, to stand by the old flag, and go forth, under that venerated ensign, to fight to the death for king, country and home. From all quarters the militia offered their immediate services, and bands of willing volunteers poured into York, Newark, Kingston,—all the known places of rendezvous,—eager to bear arms, and disappointed when, simply because there were no weapons with which to furnish them, many had to return to a forced inaction. General Brock had speedily issued all the arms at his disposal, which, indeed, were barely “sufficient to arm the militia required to guard the frontier.” Some, indeed, remedied this lack by their own ingenuity, and if ploughshares were not literally turned into swords, and pruning-hooks into spears, something very like it took place in the conversion of the peaceful implements of husbandry into weapons of destruction. But arms were not the only thing sorely needed. Many of the poor brave colonists who left their fields and mustered to the defence, were sadly destitute of clothing, and many were absolutely without shoes, which were at that time very scarce and difficult to procure. In such circumstances, the privations they endured in necessary drilling,—the exposure and fatigue of military duty,—added an additional element of heroism to the cheerfully rendered service of the Canadian volunteers.

Major Meredith and Liliás had returned to Oakridge immediately after the sudden, though not unlooked-for tidings had been received at Dunlathmon ;—the former to collect and organise his band of volunteers, that he might take them to Newark to be ready for whatever emergency might present itself. Liliás would not remain behind him, though strongly urged to do so. She clung more than ever to her father, now that he was really going into danger, and could not bear the thought of being separated from him unnecessarily, even for an hour. In her secret heart she regretted that she should not have another opportunity of seeing Ernest, that she might find out whether he knew of the existence of the rumours of which Captain Percival had spoken, and might ascertain how they had arisen, and what means could be taken for her friend's vindication from a slander that caused her no little pain. But this could not be helped ; so, the next morning but one after the excursion to the Falls, having exchanged an affectionate farewell with Marjorie, who was absorbed, heart and soul, in the military preparations going on around her, and having received from her a promise that she would soon come to stay with her at The Elms during Major Meredith's absence, Liliás and her father set out on their long ride homeward. They reached Oakridge about dusk, startling old Nannie by their unexpected arrival, and filling her with consternation at the news they had to tell, which had not yet reached secluded Oakridge.

There, as elsewhere, the tide of excited feeling ran in two different channels ; that of the eager, ardent enthusiasm of the men, burning to press forward and repel the unscrupulous invader ; and the sorrow, anxiety and foreboding care of the women, to whom the tidings came almost as a death-knell ; who saw the peaceful tranquillity of their happy homes broken up—it might be for ever ; and those dearest to them preparing to go forth to imminent peril, to probable wounds, and to possibilities beyond these which their minds could not ignore, though their hearts shrank from contemplating them. Yet few were the women who would have sought immunity from this load of anxiety by counselling husband or son or brother to purchase peace by disloyal compromise ; no, not even such gentle Quakeresses as Patience Thurstane. *Their* sacrifice for King and Country was a heavy one, but they made it unflinchingly ;—ready, moreover, to make up so far as they could by the hard labour of their own hands, for the unavoidable absence of the strong arms which should have gathered in the crops in the busy days of harvest. But many a bronzed yeoman, as he shouldered his hunting rifle, or, perhaps, a rusty old firelock that had descended to him as an old heirloom from some long dead ancestor, and as, after the clinging farewells of wife and children, he turned his back on his rude but comfortable homestead,—on the familiar fields he had cleared and tilled, and the animals he had cared for, with

their patient, well-known faces looking wistfully at him as he passed, felt a strange choking in his throat, and the unaccustomed tear dimming the eyes that again and again turned to take a farewell look at the home which, he knew, he might never see again.

General Brock, in the meantime, was hard at work, physically and mentally, labouring to provide for the protection of the long exposed frontier under his command,—a task by no means easy with a water-frontier of 1,300 miles in the Upper Province alone, and little more than the same number of regular soldiers, exclusive of garrisons. It was clear enough that, without the substantial and ready aid of Canadian volunteers, the British force could not long have maintained the unequal contest; and without the rallying point of its brave, resolute, hopeful, foreseeing and prompt General and President, the country itself might soon have sunk into a demoralising despondency. But General Brock foresaw and provided for every exigency, gave confidence to the anxious and sometimes drooping spirits of the people, and encouraged and cheered them on to their staunch and effectual defence.

On the 12th of July, as has been said, General Hull's expedition, which had been for some time gathering in Michigan, crossed the frontier at Detroit, believing that they were advancing to the easy conquest of the coveted prize. His proclamation has already been described, threatening the people with all the horrors and calamities of

war, should they refuse the "peace, liberty, and security" which he offered them. To this General Brock replied in the dignified and manly tone becoming a British commander, that :— "The Crown of England would defend and avenge all its subjects, whether red or white ; that Canada knew her duty to herself and to her Sovereign, and was neither to be bullied nor cajoled into a departure from it."

On the 27th of July, General Brock convened, at York, an extra Session of the Legislature of Upper Canada. At first, considerable despondency was perceptible in the counsels and speeches of those who had met for deliberation at so momentous a crisis ; but the energy and ascendancy of Brock's animating genius, conjoined with the spontaneous outburst of loyalty and patriotism among the people, rallied the spirits and the courage even of those who took the gloomiest view of the situation. His address to the people sounded no uncertain note. "We are engaged,"—he said, "in an awful and eventful contest. By unanimity in our councils, and by vigour in our operations, we may teach the country this lesson, that a country defended by freemen, enthusiastically devoted to the cause of their King and Constitution, can never be conquered." And the strain was repeated and prolonged by the address sent forth to the people by the Legislative Assembly. They expressed their joy at observing that "the spirit of loyalty has burst forth in all its ancient

splendour,"—and their natural indignation against the invaders of a peaceful country ; and they concluded with the noble words, expressive of the calm and deliberate resolve of those who, standing entirely on the defensive, are yet determined to resist to the death an unmitigated wrong, and to defend their country and their liberty :—
“ Persevere as you have begun, in your strict obedience to the laws and your attention to military discipline ; deem no sacrifice too costly which secures the enjoyment of our happy constitution ; follow, with your countrymen in Britain, the paths of virtue, and, like them, you shall triumph over all your unprincipled foes.”

Meantime, the militia mustered on the frontier were drilling and practising with what patience they might as they thought of their neglected fields. General Brock was moving energetically backward and forward between the frontier force at Fort George and the Legislature at York, presiding at deliberations, writing despatches to Quebec, sending detachments to outposts, negotiating with Indians—among whom he feared fickleness and disloyalty from the influence of American emissaries,—soothing the impatience of the rural militiamen, and organising with unflagging zeal. He refrained from making any active demonstration on the river, because, as he wrote,—
“ Fort Niagara can be demolished, when found necessary, in half an hour ;” but—“ to enable the militia to acquire some degree of discipline, without interruption, is of far greater consequence than such a conquest.”

In heartfelt recognition of dependence on the Disposer of all events,—in an age when such public recognition was rarer than it happily is now,—General Brock early appointed a day for fasting and prayer for the success of the country's defence from the horrors of successful invasion, in which the people, of all creeds and classes, heartily joined. And, having thus taken not the least effectual means of success, of giving calmness and confidence to the excited people, and inspiring them with the spirit of trustful courage which is the best preparation for any time of trial, he took care also not to neglect any of the more outward and tangible means of defence which the circumstance would admit, and which his active mind and judicious foresight could devise.

Long before the end of July, hostilities had actually commenced in the far west. At Tarortee and Macinaw, British pluck and steadfastness were resisting the progress of the invader among the western marshes, and on the shores of Lake Huron. A detachment of Captain Percival's regiment, the 41st, had been sent to Amherstburg or Fort Malden, by General Brock's foresight, so early as May, but the General was reduced "almost to despair" when, on the 20th of July, he received information that Hull had been, since the 12th, in possession of the village of Sandwich. Colonel Proctor, of the 41st, was accordingly instantly despatched thither to ascertain accurately the state of affairs, and fresh detachments of

troops and militia were sent to the same quarter. Percival would gladly have gone with that portion of his regiment which was already on the scene of action. But, both on account of his comparative inexperience of the country, and of the good service which his thorough theoretical mastery of his profession, and his experience at the home depot, enabled him to render in organizing and disciplining the militia force, General Brock preferred his remaining for the present at Fort George.

Not a few of the settlers along the shore of the Niagara, in alarm at the threatening demonstrations of the Americans opposite, removed their families and most of their household goods to some safer retreat in the interior. Colonel McLeod did not think it necessary, in the present state of affairs, to send away his family—a step, indeed, which Marjorie, for one, would have vehemently opposed. But he yielded to his wife's anxiety so far as to allow all the plate and valuables of the family to be packed up and sent to Fort George for safety, to be transmitted thence to Quebec, should need arise. All his horses, except one for farm-work—even Marjorie's pet, Oscar—had been placed at the disposal of the General and promoted to military service; for Colonel McLeod was not the man to keep back anything—even his own sons—from his country's need. And Marjorie almost rejoiced in the pang it had cost her to part even temporarily with Oscar, because it gave her the right to feel that she, too, had already sacrificed something for King and Country.

In the meanwhile Liliás was undergoing one of those seasons of silent, repressed anxiety which soon blanch a girl's cheek and leave signs of their presence in the dark circles under the eyes, that often indicate inward pain. Her father found it necessary to be almost constantly at Newark with his volunteers, only getting home occasionally for a flying visit of a few hours. Exciting rumours were always afloat through the country, announcing some new and threatening move of the enemy, and, though generally unfounded, they had none the less, for the time, a painfully disturbing effect; the more so that, from the demonstrations of the American troops, it was generally believed that an attack on the Niagara frontier might be at any moment expected. If so, Liliás knew well that both her father and Ernest would probably be engaged in the conflict that must follow; and she was haunted by the thought that at any time she might hear that one or both had been wounded—or worse!

Old Nannie was so excited about the state of affairs, and so prone to gloomy anticipations, that Liliás tried, as far as it was possible, to keep her from hearing each new rumour as it arose, and thus could not even give herself the relief of discussing its improbabilities, but was obliged to reason it out as well as she could in her own mind. Now and then, when the weight seemed too oppressive to bear any longer unshared, she would mount her grey pony and ride over to the Lake Farm, or would summon Bruno

to attend her in a walk to Aunt Judy's cottage; and always returned cheered and strengthened by Patience Thurstane's sweet trustful resignation, or by the bright hopeful faith of the old negress. Mrs. Thurstane's boys were all gone to Newark except the youngest, and Jacob held himself in readiness to go to the front at once if he were needed. But still she quietly went about all her household avocations;—still were her kitchen and dairy immaculately clean as of old;—still did she spin and knit on as steadily as ever, though the spectacles that aided the failing sight had to be wiped a good deal oftener than was their wont. "For," as she said to 'Miss Lilies,' "there's no good in taking on to fight against a trial! That only makes it the harder to bear. Man can't go any farther than the Lord lets him; and it ought to keep us from frettin' overmuch to think that we ourselves, as well as the folks we love and would give our lives for, are all in the hands of One that loves them and us best of all!"

And Aunt Judy would comfort her "chile," as she called her, by telling her all the stories she could remember—and they were not a few—of providential deliverances, merciful interpositions in hours when, humanly speaking, danger seemed imminent. "An' anyways, chile," she would conclude, "I have been young and now am old, and I'se sartin', now, what I didn't jes' use to b'lieve when I was young and silly, dat de Lord can do a great sight better for us dan we could do for ourselves, an' dat de

best ting *we* can do is jes' to keep still an' see what He's goin' to do. An' sure I am dat if we do, He won't neber disappoint us, but somehow or oder we shall see de goodness of de Lord in de land of de livin'. For He's all love, honey, *dat* I'se sure of ; an' He jes' wants to do de berry best for us dat can possibly be done !"

It was a great comfort to Liliás when Marjorie, at considerable sacrifice to her own feelings in leaving just then the vicinity of Fort George, redeemed her promise of coming to stay a few days with her. Not usually a great talker, she grew positively loquacious on the first evening of Marjorie's visit, in the reaction of having some one to whom she could speak freely of everything that lay on her mind ;—on every subject, that is, except one. She had never confided, even to Marjorie, Captain Percival's remark about Ernest, which, at the time it was made, Marjorie did not happen to hear. But the two girls had plenty of wholesome occupation to keep them from morbid and profitless brooding. The absence of Major Meredith and all his able-bodied men, leaving only the boy Sambo—to his grandmother's great content,—to attend to the farm-work, made, of necessity, an unusual amount of labour fall upon the female members of the household. Much of Sambo's usual work had to be done by the one handmaid under old Nannie, whose work therefore fell chiefly on Liliás. Moreover, there was the hay-harvest to be got in,—delayed already beyond the usual time,—and Liliás

was determined that, so far as she could help it, her father's farming affairs should not suffer through his necessary absence. So, as Sambo by degrees managed to get the hay cut, aided by Jacob Thurstane, who kindly insisted on sparing a day for this purpose from his own great press of work, Marjorie and Liliass spent the early mornings, before the sun's heat grew too fierce, in turning over the hay and spreading it out, so that all of it might be fully exposed to the heat of the sun. Then, after it was sufficiently dry, they piled it up with Sambo's help into haystacks, in the construction and symmetry of which they took great pride. They found the work rather more tiring than they had anticipated from their former recollections of playing at haymaking ; but it was wholesome and invigorating, driving away painful thoughts, at least for the time. When they were hard at work tossing or spreading out the hay,—the freshness of the summer morning around them and the pure morning sky above them,—it was impossible for the natural buoyancy of youth not to assert itself even in Liliass' burdened heart ; and many a hearty laugh—generally over some amusing sally of Marjorie's—did they have while at their unwonted labours. If they did come in generally, tired out, when the forenoon grew hot, a siesta rested and refreshed them ; and if, to Nannie's grief, Liliass' delicate complexion grew more sunburnt than it had ever been in her life before, it is certain that the balance of good effects, on

the whole, preponderated over such trifling and temporary inconveniences. So Major Meredith, on his next hurried visit home, found his hay-crop all ready to be carted into the barn under his own superintendence. The occasion was made as much a festal one as circumstances would permit—Sambo being *feted*, to his own delight, for the first time in his life; and the girls felt themselves abundantly rewarded for their labour in the surprise and pleasure of the worthy Major, who had been inwardly fretting over his hay, and who could hardly find words to express his thanks and his praise of the skill and energy of his amateur haymakers.

But all this time Lilius could hear nothing definite of Ernest, except merely such general intelligence as she could glean from her father's occasional mention of having seen him, or the rare messages that came from the Thurstane boys to the Lake Farm.

CHAPTER XI.

AT NEWARK.

“ ‘Down with him!’ cried false Sextus,

With a smile on his pale face—

‘Now yield thee,’ cried Lars Porsena—

‘Now yield thee to our grace.’ ”

IT was about this time that Ernest Heathcote, having given his boys their summer vacation, and so, feeling a little more at leisure than he had done of late, indulged himself one afternoon in a quiet, meditative stroll along the wooded shore of the Niagara, towards Queenston. Such a walk was a rare luxury to him now, since all his spare time, after school hours, had been fully occupied with the drilling, practising, &c., necessary to enable him to keep up with his company. He had been indefatigable in labouring to qualify himself for being an efficient defender of his country, now that a crisis was approaching, and his exertions had done him good in more ways than one. They served all the purpose of gymnastics in strengthening and developing his physical powers by the active exercise which his ardour for study had led him too much to neglect; while, at the same time, the outward activity, the stir and bustle of the time, drew him out of the rather morbid

speculations,—the fruitless theorizing and brooding over evils which he had no power to remedy, in which he had been too prone to indulge. Despite his strong and true sense of the evils of war, when the declaration of hostility had become a reality, and Newark was full of rumours of invasion, of the stir and pomp of busy military preparation,—of the bustle of constantly arriving volunteers,—he found all his strong sentiments give way before the irresistible excitement of the moment, which developed the latent military enthusiasm inherited from his soldier-father. He was surprised, himself, to feel how his heart thrilled with martial ardour and overpowering emotion when he heard the bugle call to parade, or saw the motley ranks of volunteers march in,—each man, poorly dressed as he might be, bearing himself with a certain grave steadfastness which seemed to signify his feeling that Canada expected every man to do his duty, and that *he* was ready to do it.

Ernest's patriotic zeal was, moreover, quickened by his honest ambition that whatever he did should be done well, and so great already was his proficiency in military exercises that he had been honoured by the expressed approbation of the officer in command, and had good hopes of soon obtaining a commission. This he desired, chiefly because he knew how it would raise him in the estimation of Major Meredith, if not of Lillas. It need hardly be said that he was thinking of her, as, having passed the earthen ramparts and cedar palisades of Fort

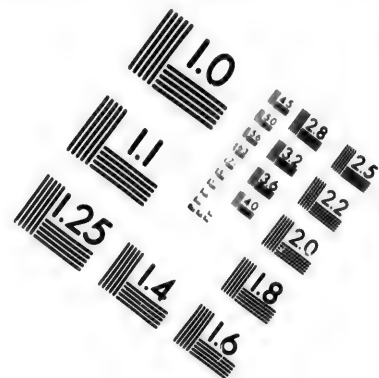
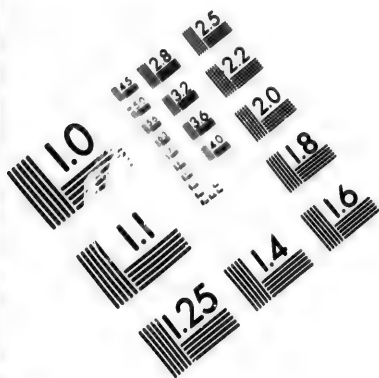
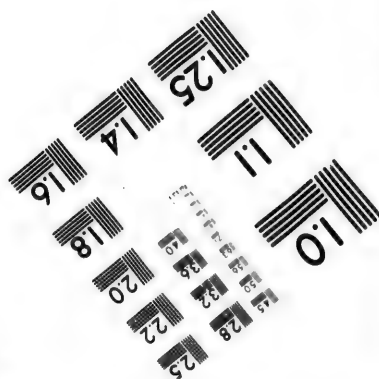
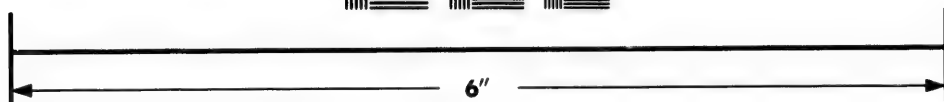
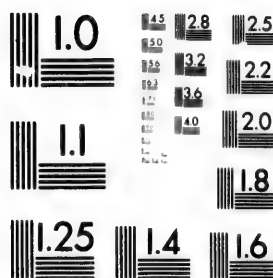


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George, half a mile above the village of Newark, he sauntered slowly along the river bank, enjoying the cool freshness of the woods, the soft song of the rushing river, and the unwonted rest of a leisurely stroll. He had been wondering often, during these days of excitement, how Liliás was bearing up under the manifold anxieties of the times. He knew that the excitement and suspense must be very trying to her sensitive nature, apart from any anxiety about him, which he did not take into account.

But he had other subjects of thought, considerably less pleasant. He was quite aware of the existence of floating rumours about himself, throwing doubts upon his loyalty and truth, if not positively accusing him of the reverse. He could trace these, partially at least, to Bill Davis, who he knew had an old grudge against him. Then, both Davis and Payne had at once conjectured Ernest's interference when the latter found that Rachel, influenced to some extent by the remonstrance of Liliás, had become much more cautious and prudent. This was quite sufficient to impel them to do him what harm they could, by throwing out insinuations and starting reports to which Ernest's American parentage gave a certain colouring of *vraisemblance*. Moreover, his invariable moderation in speaking of a country which had strong claims on his regard,—his refusal to join in wholesale denunciations of a people who had, he felt, something to complain of on their side,—also tended to make his disaffection suspected by

those who, in the excited feeling of the time, could look at the matter only from their own point of view, and who could find no epithets strong enough to express the indignation, and too often the hatred, which the unhappy war had evoked. And being too proud to forestall accusation by explanations, and clear himself from a slander which he felt was so absurd and so unworthy, he could do nothing but silently abide the issue, feeling, meantime, that a tide of hostile feeling was rising against him, and that he was coldly and suspiciously regarded by some who had once been friends. The possibility of Lilius being pained by hearing these rumours had not even occurred to him. Should Major Meredith hear them, he felt sure that he, who knew him so well, would not listen to them for a moment, but would treat them with the same utter incredulity as did his cousins, who laughed heartily at the very idea of such a suspicion. Yet still they were in themselves sufficiently annoying to one who was especially sensitive to any imputation of what he considered unworthy and ignoble.

He had nearly reached the limit he had set himself for his walk, when he heard hasty shuffling steps behind him, and presently found himself overtaken by a shabby, Yankee-looking man, of unprepossessing exterior, and with a sly, cunning expression, which made Ernest shrink from him with instinctive repugnance. It was the wandering American who had been Captain Percival's fellow-traveller

in the stage. The man was, in fact, one of the numerous emissaries who, just before the war, had been sent into Canada to collect information, to sow disaffection among the Indians, and to seduce, or try to seduce from their allegiance, any dissatisfied Canadians whom they might encounter.

The stranger, with whom Ernest was in no wise inclined to fraternise even on a solitary walk, pertinaciously insisted on opening a conversation, and after some opening remarks, expressed in an unmistakeably Yankee intonation, he led the way to his object by claiming Ernest as a fellow-countryman. This honour the latter very coldly declined, by replying that Canada was, to all intents and purposes, his country. The American, however, nothing daunted, went on slowly, and not very adroitly, feeling his way towards his purpose, which was, as Ernest soon indignantly discovered, to try to induce him to desert to the American army, by the bait of a commission and a considerable sum of money. The moment that the man's object became clear to him, Ernest emphatically declared that he could not even listen to so disgraceful a proposition. But the other stuck to him with irrepressible pertinacity, referring to the rumours afloat of his doubtful loyalty, to their necessarily injurious effect on his career in Canada, and even threatening, in case of his refusal, to drop a few hints which would very seriously aggravate the present suspicions about him. Ernest

knew that this was within his power; but, not caring to prolong a parley which he felt it humiliating to him that the man should have dared to open, he sternly told him to "do his worst," and with a cold "good afternoon," abruptly turned homeward. The stranger, seeing that any farther attempts were clearly useless, went on his way, after casting an evil glance after Ernest, with a muttered threat that it would be the "worse for him."

Ernest's unpleasant *rencontres* were not yet, however, over for the day. As, in his indignant excitement, he walked rapidly homeward, he overtook two figures walking slowly before him, in whom, just as he reached them, he recognised Bill Davis and Lieut. Payne. He would have passed with the slightest gesture of recognition, but some words which reached his ear just as he came up with them, and which seemed to him to relate to his uncle and cousin, made him pause for a moment, involuntarily, and look at the speakers as he was about to pass. The action, slight as it was, was enough for Davis, who rudely and offensively exclaimed, "Come now, Ernest Heathcote, we don't want none of your intermeddling! Do you hear? You let our affairs alone or it'll be the worse for you. You've put your finger in the pie quite enough already!"

"Anything that concerns any member of my uncle's family concerns me;" replied Ernest, with as much coolness as he could command, though inwardly burning with indignation.

"Oh, does it? We'll see about that," returned the other fiercely and with a threatening gesture. "You'd better give your word to let things alone or it will be the worse for you!" He looked significantly downward as he spoke. They were at a point where the river-bank sank abruptly down from the road—a steep precipice with jagged rocks jutting out from the scattered foliage. It would be an ugly place for a scuffle, especially with two against one. Both young men were flushed with drinking, which accounted for Davis' reckless bravado, and it was quite possible that Payne, who stood by, with a malicious smile on his insipid, beardless face, might join Davis in a personal attack. A scuffle and a push, and nothing more might be known—only a mangled body found long after on the rocks below. The possibility flashed across Ernest during the few moments that he stood there facing the scowling Davis with quiet resolution. It gave him no sensation of fear; his only consciousness was one of indignation and determined resolve to thwart, if possible, their nefarious designs.

Presently Davis' menacing look subsided a little under the firm gaze of Ernest. Bad as he was, he was hardly villain enough to proceed to such extremities without at least a stronger temptation to do so. Presently he said, with a slight change of tone:

"Come now, Heathcote, I know what game you're flyin', and you'd better let our sport alone, or we'll put a spoke in *your* wheel."

"I don't understand you," replied Ernest very coldly, anxious to put an end to the conference as soon as possible.

"Oh, you don't! Miss Lilius Meredith, then! I suppose you wouldn't mind if she and her father both thought you a sneaking spy, as every one will soon know you for, if we tell all we've seen to-day?" and he indicated with his hand the direction in which the American had disappeared.

Ernest had flushed crimson and then grown pale at the insulting words, combined with the allusion to Lilius. But he forced himself to reply quietly: "You know as well as I do that there are no grounds for such an accusation. As for what you've seen, you are at liberty to tell it. A man is not responsible for being accosted by a scoundrel."

"Oh, you take that tack, do you? Well, will you say 'Confound the rascally Yankees?'"—returned Davis, with an aggravating leer. Payne, still looking on with a contemptuous smile that showed all his white teeth, added in a patronizing drawl:

"Do, my good fellow, and we shall be sure you're all right."

"I'm not in the habit of abusing absent people unnecessarily," Ernest answered haughtily; "when the time comes for action my loyalty will be sufficiently proved."

"You won't, then?" retorted Davis, in a bullying tone.

"I will not," said Ernest unflinchingly, aware that his

refusal would be perverted to his injury, yet disdaining to qualify it by any explanation.

"Well, then, look here," said Davis, in the same tone; "just so sure as you poke yourself into any affairs of ours again, just so sure you'll find we're one too many for you! You won't enjoy being drummed out of your company as a traitor and a spy!"

"If that is all you have to say to me, I will bid you good afternoon," replied Ernest, who felt that his self-command was fast leaving him, and did not wish to degrade himself by bandying abuse with a fellow like Davis; and, passing on, he quickened his pace, as if he could thereby walk down the indignant agitation which, in spite of himself, the unprovoked abuse he had met with had excited. "It isn't worth one's while to be angry with a fellow like that,"—he said to himself philosophically, but his philosophy was hardly sufficient to calm the inward and painful commotion. The allusion to Lilius, touching so rudely on a subject on which he hardly dared to let his own thoughts dwell openly, had touched him to the quick, and he was aware that, in such a season of excitement, even the idle slanders of scoundrels like Davis and Payne would be quite sufficient to do him real harm. But he trusted, as most honest and inexperienced hearts do generally trust, in the certain prevalence of the right cause, and he would not permit himself to indulge any fear as to consequences. All the same, and come what might, he

would at all hazards do everything in his power to protect his fair young cousin from the machinations of these villains. As he walked along, the thought flashed across him that his two *rencontres* might not have been so unconnected with each other as they first seemed. The American had overtaken him from the same direction in which the other two had been walking. Might not the blundering attempt of the former have been made at the instigation of Davis, in order to give a colour to his accusation of treachery? If so, he would be sure to use the encounter to the best advantage. Well, it was of no use to speculate! He could only go quietly on with his duties, and await the result that time might develop.

It was not long before he found out that the threats against himself were by no means meaningless bluster. One of the trustees of the school he taught had a son who frequented the society of Payne, Davis, and their set. Him these worthies took care to ply with reports, insinuations, and direct accusations of Ernest Heathcote, and their work bore fruit in a note which Ernest, in the course of a few days, received from his principal trustee, notifying him that his services would not be required in the school after the holidays. It was an abruptness of dismissal hardly in accordance with the tenor of his engagement, to say nothing of the discourtesy and ungraciousness of so treating a teacher who had faithfully discharged his duties for somewhat more than two years; but Ernest

could not bring himself to expostulate, and, as no reason was assigned, preferred silently to accept the situation, with all its injustice. The prospect of relief from the drudgery of his school duties would have been in itself a relief had it been otherwise brought about, although at present he did not exactly see what employment would succeed the one which had so abruptly ceased. But other consequences of the enmity he had unintentionally provoked were soon to make themselves more painfully felt.

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CHAPTER XII.

AT OAKRIDGE.

"Who steals my purse steals trash,
But he who filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

IT was a warm July evening at Oakridge. Marjorie had gone home, and Liliás, now that she was left alone, was feeling a depression and a lassitude that was the natural reaction after the unusual fatigue and excitement of the last few weeks. That afternoon the air felt sultry, betokening, perhaps, an approaching thunderstorm; and Liliás felt as if she could not bear up against the combination of oppression in the atmosphere without and depression within. The hot still air seemed to stifle her as with a sense of coming ill. She could not compel herself to continue any occupation, so in despair she threw herself on the grass at the foot of a tree and began the "Ancient Mariner" again, for the third or fourth time. But even that failed to hold her attention, and she found her eyes wandering to the motionless leaves above her head, and her thoughts taking the road they had of late taken so many times a day,—the road to Newark. Her

father had dropped a hint during his last visit home, which made her fear that he had not only heard something of the rumours to which Captain Percival had alluded, but was also somewhat inclined to believe them. Yet it was not like her father, she thought, to believe evil of a friend without serious cause. Certainly she had very slight foundation for thinking that he did, but love is often preternaturally acute, and goes straight to the mark in spite of itself, when ordinary reasoning lags far behind. And the combination of anxieties, added to her depressed health and spirits, made Lillias long to see or hear from Ernest, with an intensity of longing that she had never been conscious of feeling before, and for which, powerless as she was to help it, she was almost angry with herself.

She was roused out of a reverie of this kind by the rapid clatter of a horse's hoofs along the road. Looking through the vista formed by the overhanging branches, she could just see her father dismount at the farm gate, mount again and ride up the road that led to the back door. She rushed quickly to the house to meet and welcome him, and order a substantial meal to refresh him after his long ride. Major Meredith seemed, indeed, unusually weary. He was hot and flustered, too, and his sunburnt face had the added redness, which was rather a sign of inward worry than of mere outward exertion. It did not pass away when he had rested for a while, and he seemed in a troubled, silent mood, very unlike the good-

humoured and talkative one in which he usually came home. He ate little and talked less, not asking even his usual routine of questions about the farm, the neighbours, and home affairs generally. Lilius grew more and more uneasy as she wondered what could be the matter. Sometimes her father would make a beginning as if about to say something important, and as often stopped short, hesitating and flurried. At last, with a great effort, and without preamble, it came out.

"Lilius," he said, with an attempt at a determined tone, but with a really unsteady voice, "I wish you for the future to have nothing whatever to say to Ernest Heathcote."

Lilius remained perfectly still, but her face, which had grown deadly pale, and her dilated eyes, which inward emotion always made darker, told how the sudden, peremptory speech had startled her. At last she found voice to say, in a low, half-stifled tone,—

"Why, father?"

"I have reasons for not explaining the matter fully," replied he, concealing his own uneasiness under an assumption of importance; "but there are good reasons—only too good reasons."

But it must have been a very strong cause indeed that could repress the good Major's natural communicativeness, and he presently went on—

"The lad has disappointed me, very much disappointed

me ! I find there are grave suspicions of his loyalty. He has even been seen in communication with a known Yankee spy."

"But, father," said Lillas, beginning to recover from the startling effect of the unexpected announcement, "you know how false reports arise in a time like this ! Think how long you have known Ernest. Why not trust *him* rather than mere rumours?"

"It is not mere rumour, Lillas. I do not give such ready heed to rumours ; I had it on good authority. But that isn't all," he added, forgetting his reticent resolves. "He has been speaking, also, in an improper way of—you ; presuming on all the kindness he has received here, and returning it thus ! I have excellent authority for knowing that your name was talked of in a very unpleasant and improper manner between him and such fellows as Bill Davis."

The blood had rushed impetuously to Lillas' face, and now rushed back by a violent revulsion to her heart, leaving her face colourless. What if this should be true ? Could it be possible ? Then her heart replied at once :—No ! Ernest could not act so unworthily !

"But, father," she said at last, almost inaudibly, "I am sure there must be some mistake. I know he could not do so."

"I never should have thought it," replied the Major, rather bitterly, "but I had it on too good authority—that

of Captain Percival, who is too honourable a man to say anything untrue—and he had it from one who was present. So remember, Liliass, have nothing more to do with him in any way! I can't have anything to say to a fellow who speaks of my little girl disrespectfully, nor let you have, either ;" and, putting his arm around her, he kissed his daughter, who had to exert all the self-control in her power to keep down the sob that was rising in her throat.

Her face had flushed again when her father had named Captain Percival as his authority, partly from a feeling of anger at his interference, partly from shame and mortification that he should have heard anything of the kind, however untrue, about her. But she did not for a moment believe that the thing itself was true, however the report might have arisen. She felt that she knew Ernest too well, that she had too good reasons for implicit confidence in his honour, his truth,—in the scrupulous care he would exercise where her name was concerned, to entertain for a moment the idea that he could possibly have even alluded to her voluntarily in a conversation with Bill Davis. But it was of no use to reiterate her own disbelief. Her father had evidently been fully impressed with the truth of what he had heard, and she knew how useless it was to try, by reasoning, to remove either an idea or a prejudice when once lodged in his mind. It could be done only by disproof, and that for the present was impossible. So she said nothing more, and by a violent effort retained her

composure until, after a short interval of silence, her father rose wearily, saying he must go to bed. Lilius bade him her usual affectionate good-night, and lighted his candle. Then she escaped to her room, where her repressed agitation found relief, first in natural tears, and then in laying her burden at the feet of Him who cares for the sorrows of all His children.

When the traditional "cruel parent" interferes with the course of true love, he is usually such a hard-hearted, unnatural ogre—so dead to all feelings of parental love—so completely under the sway of worldly and sordid motives, that the daughter's course is comparatively simple. It is, to cling at all hazards to the new affection that has taken root in her life, without troubling herself about the fate of the old relationship to which she owes her existence, and whose protection has sheltered her life until now. She is not troubled by any sweet reminiscences of tender affection and loving care, for there have been none, apparently, to recall. But when the bond between father and daughter has been that of strong exclusive attachment and reciprocal care; when it is an old love that arrays itself against the new, with all the tender, old-time associations; when it is the very love and care of the father that prompts the interference,—for the difference is as truly one of point of view as was that between the knights of old, and the shield is as truly brazen to the father as it is silver to the daughter,—then the case is very different,

and the struggle in the daughter's heart much more complicated.

And Liliass' always deep affection for her father had been of late deepened and intensified by the thought of his possible, nay probable exposure to danger. In the dreams of surprises and sanguinary conflicts which had lately been troubling her slumbers, she had more than once seen the grey head that was so dear to her, first leading the way with British pluck into the thickest of the fight, then laid low in the dust, stained with blood. Such ideas, which would not be shut out, made her heart more than usually tender towards her father,—made her anxious to save him every unnecessary trouble and worry ; and now, when he had been so troubled by hearing that her name had been disrespectfully used by one who certainly owed him gratitude for much past kindness, Liliass felt that she must not argue the matter farther, but must submit quietly for the present, and wait till time should bring to light Ernest's innocence,—for innocent she was certain he was.

Major Meredith had his own painful thoughts about the matter, too ; and an additional source of uneasiness, which, for a wonder, was hidden in his own breast. The conversation with Percival, in which Ernest had thus been maligned—unconsciously maligned certainly, for Percival had persuaded himself that what he wished to believe was true—had arisen from some hints in which the latter had led Major Meredith to infer his own admiration and

regard for Liliás, an inference which was thoroughly in accordance with the Major's own wishes. But Percival had further hinted that he feared he might already be forestalled in Liliás' regard, and, on Major Meredith's warm assertion that he was sure such a thing was impossible, had fortified his position still further by means that lay ready to his hand. Accordingly he proceeded to communicate to the Major, already irritated by the idea which had been suggested to him, a good deal of the ill-natured gossip which Payne had been circulating about Ernest whenever he could find a listener as interested and as credulous as Percival. The indignant excitement of Major Meredith gave Percival good reason to suppose that Liliás would soon hear what he was certain would have its weight with her, even if it should give her some pain. In spite of himself, his conscience troubled him a little about the honourableness of thus stabbing a rival in the dark; but he inwardly justified himself with the reflection that the stab was deserved, and that by this means he was not only exposing a wrong, but also increasing his chance of gaining what he had persuaded himself was absolutely necessary to his future happiness. But Major Meredith, now that the idea of Liliás' preference for Heathcote had fairly entered his mind, was somewhat disquieted lest it might not be so groundless as he had wished to believe. He began to accuse himself of imprudence in having permitted the young people to be so much together,

for, though he shrank from the idea of causing pain to Liliás, he could not bring himself to regard a possible union between her and Ernest as anything but a *mesalliance*,—as much so as if they had been encompassed by the most rigid restrictions of English social opinion. It would touch his personal pride, too, as well as his conservative class prejudices, for his friends in England had prophesied such a result as one of the inevitable consequences of his settling, against their wishes, in Canada, when he retired on half pay. He had always put such an idea far from him, and had, till lately, persevered in regarding Liliás as a child; but of late the thought of Captain Percival as a possible son-in-law had lodged itself in his mind as a happy way of settling his daughter's future, and falsifying the prediction which still lingered in his memory. As the son of an old friend, the scion of an ancient family, a brave and enthusiastic soldier, sure to rise in his profession,—the profession most honorable of all in the Major's eyes,—Percival had, in his estimation, everything to make him a desirable *parti* for Liliás. And all these desirable qualifications were lacked by poor Ernest, whom Captain Percival had contemptuously styled "a village schoolmaster." It *would* be awkward if Liliás cared for the fellow, thought the Major; for he had by no means lost the memory of his own strong attachment, and of the grief of his loss. And the pain which he felt, rather than saw, Liliás had received from his communication increased

his rising misgiving lest Percival's theory of a rival might be true. But he trusted that, if so, the information he had given her would open her eyes and steel her heart against Ernest ; and nothing more was said on the subject during his short visit. He was so sure of his daughter's honourable regard for his wishes that he did not feel it necessary to repeat his charge, and they parted with the tacit understanding that it would not be disregarded. But indeed Liliás was hardly likely at present to have any temptation to transgress it. She was, for once, glad of her father's departure, which relieved her from the effort of keeping up an appearance of cheerfulness with a sorely troubled heart.

About a week after his departure, Liliás was seated under her favourite hickory, her hands busily engaged in making an elaborate shirt for her father, while her thoughts had, as usual, wandered to Newark, when she saw John Wardle halt at the gate of The Elms. She knew that this, nowadays, generally portended a letter or a message from her father, and throwing down her work, she ran to the gate to receive what he had brought. There was, perhaps, the shadow of a smile in the corner of honest John's mouth, which he would have deemed it disrespectful to show more distinctly, when he took carefully out of his pocket a note neatly folded and sealed, and handed it to Miss Liliás, saying that he was "bid to give it to her—her own self."

Liliás saw at a glance that the superscription was in

Ernest's handwriting, and her heart began to beat so violently, with mingled surprise, gladness and perplexity, that she found it difficult to command her voice so as to give old John the few pleasant words he always expected from her. At last, after what seemed a long time, she got away, and, sitting down again under her tree, she read and re-read the superscription before she could make up her mind whether it was right to open it. Was it not against the spirit, if not the letter of her father's command, even to read a communication from Ernest? And yet she felt sure that the note must have been written for good reason, and that harm might result from her leaving it unread. Ernest could not know of the prohibition of intercourse, and she might surely read what he had written, even though she could not, of course, reply to it. At any rate she could not bring herself to destroy the letter unread; and to keep it and not read it seemed as impossible. So, although with a feeling of pain and perplexity at her heart, she cut the paper round the seal with careful, loving hand, and opened and read it.

She scarcely knew whether she was relieved or disappointed to find that the note contained no reference to personal matters, and needed no answer except action. There were only a few words, evidently written in haste, to say that he had every reason to fear that Payne intended to try to inveigle Rachel into an elopement and a mock marriage. Would Liliás kindly see Rachel as

speedily as possible, and, if she thought it needful, would she even cautiously put his uncle and aunt on their guard? He wished to spare them the pain of knowing anything about it, if possible; but it might be necessary. He would have come himself if he could have got away, but as he could not do so just then, he was sure he might take the liberty of asking Lilius.

She closed the note with a half sigh. Its tone was so thoroughly, almost distantly respectful, that it seemed silently to rebuke the thoughts and feelings of which she had been conscious in regard to him. She could not know the aching longings that had been repressed—to say just one little word more! But she knew better, or perhaps it would be more correct to say *felt* more truly, now than to entertain any jealousy about his concern for Rachel's welfare, and she resolved to attend to his request as speedily as possible.

Accordingly, as soon as the afternoon had grown a little cooler, she mounted her grey pony and rode off to the Lake Farm. When she reached it she found Mrs. Thurstane sitting alone at the spinning wheel, on which she was busily spinning wool for the winter stockings. She had more than her usual share of that to do this year, as Rachel had to go out to the fields now to help her father and her youngest brother, in the absence of the other lads,—a task that did not altogether please Rachel, who had found out that the exposure was not good for her complexion.

She was not to be seen at this moment ; her mother thought she had gone to look for the cows ; so Lillas sat down to rest and enjoy a chat with her old friend. But Patience was not in her usual spirits, and Lillas soon found out that she was very anxious about Ernest. Major Meredith had encountered Jacob as he was leaving Oakridge, and, with his usual unreserve, had told him something of his dissatisfaction with his nephew and his determination to have nothing more to do with him.

"And Jacob's pretty keen when he's roused, thee knows, Miss Lillas," she said, "and of course he stood up for the lad, that he thinks as much of as of his own son ; so I'm thinking they had some hot words between them ; and my old man I can see he takes it to heart, for he thinks so much of the Major, too ! Ah, well, 'twould be a weary world if we didn't know who was over all, and that nothing can happen without His letting it ! But for Ernest I would answer as for my own self. There never was a boy was more true to whatever he undertook, nor more honest nor more careful to say nothing behind thy back that he wouldn't say before thy face."

"Indeed, I'm sure of that," replied Lillas warmly, "and I'm sure my father will be sorry by-and-by for his mistake. It will all come right by-and-by,"—she added, with a confidence she was far from feeling.

As Rachel did not soon return, Lillas said she would go and look for her, and gathering up her habit, she strolled

slowly about the farm, and down to the lake shore, every object around her bringing Ernest almost painfully to mind. But the object of her search was nowhere to be seen, and Lilius at last, not willing to be out late in the lonely road, said she must set out on her return, and come again to see Rachel. She could not bring herself at present to add to Patience's load of anxiety by explaining the reason of her visit, at least not until she could speak with Rachel herself and ascertain whether it was necessary. Patience seemed somewhat uneasy at her daughter's absence, and went to the gate herself to open it for Miss Lilius, and see her safely started.

Lilius had not gone far before she found that her stirrup-strap had come unfastened, and as she could not ride comfortably, she dismounted to set it right. To remount easily, she led her pony to a fallen log that lay at the edge of the road next the forest. Just as she was about to mount, she thought she could hear voices a little way in the wood. She listened, and was sure she could distinguish the voice of Rachel speaking in low tones. She would advance cautiously, she thought, and see ; so, throwing the pony's bridle over a branch, she picked her way in among the brushwood. Presently she came upon the figures, whom, at a glance, she could distinguish as Lieutenant Payne and Rachel, seated on a mossy log, with their backs towards her, and so engrossed in conversation that they did not hear the slight rustling she made in approaching.

them. Payne's arm was around Rachel's waist, and her hand in his, and he seemed to be coaxing her to something to which she was somewhat averse.

"Just slip away with me now, quietly," she heard him say; "I've got a good strong horse and you can ride behind me. Then when we've made everything straight, we'll come back and see the old folks, you know. And there'll be no more nasty, hard work in the hot sun for my pretty pet."

Lilias stood still for a moment, irresolute. She felt uncomfortable enough in the position of a listener, but she could not decide at once how to act. In a few moments, however, her mind was made up, and her moral courage conquered the natural shrinking that would have kept her back.

"Rachel," she said, in as calm a tone as she could command, "I'm glad I have found you. I have been at the farm looking for you."

Both Rachel and her companion had started to their feet, looking caught, the hot guilty colour flushing over Rachel's face. Lieutenant Payne made a low bow to Lilias, whom he had met before, and was about to begin a complimentary salutation. But Lilias interrupted him, looking him straight in the face with her clear, candid eyes, before which his own fell.

"Mr. Payne," she said, slowly and decidedly, "I think that anything you may have to say to Rachel had better

be said before her father and mother. If you persist in trying to see her alone, I shall have to put them on their guard."

Rachel looked miserable and imploring, and Payne tried to hide his anger and discomfiture under some suave unmeaning words, such as he was in the habit of addressing to ladies. Liliastook no further notice of him than to bid him a cool good evening, and taking Rachel's unresisting arm, she drew her towards the road, saying she would walk back to the farm-gate with her, leading her pony by his bridle. She talked earnestly and seriously to Rachel, trying to convince her of the Lieutenant's baseness in seeking to allure her away from her home, and of the terrible sorrow she would bring upon her father and mother if she listened to him ; and finally, under dread of exposure, extracted from the sobbing girl a distinct promise that she would not see or speak to her false-hearted admirer again without her mother's knowledge. It was a hard fight, but Liliastook felt sure that the victory was gained at last ; for Patience Thurstane had brought up all her family with the most soleran sense of the binding obligation of a promise. And Rachel's promise being given, it would not be easy to get her to break it.

As the two girls still stood talking at the gate, Jacob Thurstane came up on one of his stout farm-horses. He had been taking a bag of wheat to the mill at Oakridge, and was tired enough after his busy day's work. But no

entreaties of Lilius would prevent him from turning back to escort her home. "It was getting too late," he said, "for her to be out alone." And Lilius accepted his escort the more willingly that she saw it would give her an opportunity of putting the old farmer on his guard concerning Payne.

As they rode on together, he began to talk of her father, and Lilius could see that the old man's heart was a good deal troubled about his difference with "the Major."

"Him and me's rubbed on together so many years now without ever a word between us, and it comes hard to have any hasty words between us now! But then, you see, I couldn't abide to hear the lad hardly spoken of, as I'm sure he doesn't deserve it. Why, I could answer for his being true to the back-bone, if my own life was at stake for it!"

Lilius tried to soothe the good old man by her own strong assurances of trust in Ernest, and her belief that her father's distrust would ere long be removed. She felt sure it was some wicked slander, and its falsity would soon be exposed.

"Yes," said Jacob, thoughtfully, "I don't believe in betting, but I'd be willing almost to lay something considerable that it's that fellow Davis has been at the bottom of it! I saw him at the tavern as I went up to the village, with Lieutenant Payne, and I met him going back as I was coming home. I wonder what brings him round here! After no good, I reckon."

Lilias saw that she had an opportunity to give a word of warning without causing serious pain. So she replied—

"I have heard that he admires Rachel's beauty very much, and he may possibly be trying to get an opportunity to talk to her. It would be as well for you to look after her while he is about."

"Rachel! Indeed, I will," replied the farmer, emphatically. "That scamp shan't get the chance to put mischief into my child's head!" he said, little dreaming how close danger had been to the pet lamb of his fold.

Lilias felt silently thankful that she had been providentially permitted to be the means of warding off such a terrible calamity from the honest old man's home, as well as of saving Ernest's cousin, for she felt convinced that the girl's eager pleasure-loving heart had been on the point of yielding to the persuasions of a man for whom, nevertheless, she felt nothing stronger than a childish fancy.

But to make her safety surer, Lilias proceeded gently, without throwing any blame on Rachel, to give Jacob some idea of the true state of the case and of Payne's villainous scheme. His indignation, though repressed, was evidently sharp enough, and he declared that if he could only get another sight of Payne, he would give him a "bit of his mind."

This intention he had an opportunity of fulfilling next morning,—and did so to such good purpose, that the young lieutenant, somewhat abashed, saw that he must give up

his scheme as a fruitless one, and retire finally, in disgust, from Oakridge.

But Liliás, next day, felt the sensation of weariness and lassitude almost overpowering her. She had been overstrained by the varying emotions of the past few weeks, and especially by the anxiety and depression that had followed her father's last visit, and the inward strain and excitement of her interference in Rachel's affair had brought a prostrating reaction to her sensitive organisation. It soon became manifest that she was suffering from an attack of low fever, and on her father's next visit he rode off hurriedly to get the military doctor from Newark, and to send an imploring message to Marjorie McLeod, who came at once to nurse and tend her sick friend. And so Liliás, though she declared that there was scarcely anything the matter with her, dragged on weary days and nights in the languor of intense, feverish prostration.

In the meantime, the stir of excitement and expectation was largely increased by news of the fighting in the west; the action at Tarontee, where two brave privates of the 41st, like Horatius of old, "kept the bridge" in the face of overwhelming numbers, until one was killed and the other taken prisoner; the contests, with varying success, between Hull and Proctor near Detroit; and the capture of the American post at Mackinaw Island by a handful of regulars, half-breeds and Indians. As the August heat drew on, and the volunteers were beginning to

think anxiously of their yellowing fields, and wonder how the harvest would be got in, General Brock, having got through the pressing business of the Legislature at York, set out with his staff and his little escort of regular soldiers, on the expedition to Detroit, which was to end so brilliantly in its capture. Captain Percival, to his great satisfaction, was included in the General's staff, and went off in high spirits, hoping to see some action at last.

Ernest Heathcote got his ensigncy, but a few days after was sent for by his commanding officer, to answer seriously against the charges of disloyalty and treachery, rumours of which had become increasingly prevalent. But his unflinching firmness in denying the slightest shadow of foundation for such a charge, and the frank honesty of his bearing and his words, satisfied the officer that the report was only one of the baseless calumnies not unfrequently circulated in those days about loyal men. Moreover, he knew Ernest to be one of his most efficient and faithful volunteers, who could ill be spared. And Ernest went away with a lighter heart, for the few cordial words of his officer at parting satisfied him that, in that quarter at least, he would be trusted still.

CHAPTER XIII.

VICTORY !

"Hurrah ! hurrah ! a single field hath turned the chance of war ;
Hurrah ! hurrah ! for Ivry, and Henry of Navarre !"

IT was two or three weeks before Lilius had sufficiently recovered from her feverish attack to go about as usual, and even then her step and her movements had a languor that had never characterized them before. Marjorie was an invaluable companion at a time when, had she been alone, she would have been tempted, perhaps, to yield altogether to depression of mind and body. Marjorie read to her, or talked to her, almost incessantly, and as soon as possible got her out to lie on an extempore couch of skins and shawls spread under the trees. Ernest Heathcote had been once at Oakridge during her illness. He had heard of it, and had managed to get over to enquire how she really was. Of course he heard from his uncle and aunt all that Major Meredith had said of himself,—heard, too, who was the Major's informant. He was not much surprised ; for, with the instinctive feeling that seldom deceives, he had been for some time convinced that Percival was inwardly hostile to him, and so would

willingly believe anything to his discredit. Perhaps a suspicion of what might be the cause of this made it easier to bear the grievance quietly. He said little, resolving to await Captain Percival's return, and then to demand his authority for his statement. Meantime, of course, he made no attempt to see Liliás.

When she heard of his visit, Liliás was not sorry that it should have been at a time when she was still confined to her room. It would have been hard indeed, she felt, to obey her father's charge, had she been going about as usual, and perhaps met Ernest face to face. Still she longed more than she could tell, in her present state of weakness and unrest, for one glimpse of the familiar face, a few words from the familiar voice that never seemed so pleasant and so much wanted before.

There was a good deal of rainy, tempestuous weather that August, and Marjorie, whose father and eldest brother had gone with General Brock's expedition, had watched the weather from day to day with an anxious heart, feeling that the troops must suffer from exposure to its inclemency. Neither was there any means of knowing how they fared. In these days of daily papers well stocked with telegraphic reports, it is not easy to realize the trial of suspense, the longing for some tidings, the weariness of waiting till the return of the expedition, or the arrival of a slowly travelling messenger, should bring at last the tardy news. And to Marjorie's eager, impetuous nature, anxious,

both on private and public grounds, to hear how things were going,—the suspense was trying indeed.

August had dragged itself on at last to its twenty-fourth day. It had been a heavy, cloudy one, threatening rain,—the wind blowing so unpleasantly that the girls had hardly cared to venture out. Towards evening the wind fell, and they strolled out by Lilies' favourite walk, the path that led to the churchyard, and then down through the "Maple Bush" to the lake. They were surprised to find how chilly the evening was, seeming an *avant courier* of approaching autumn. The lake, instead of the delicious soft summer blueness of tint which it had so lately worn, seemed a dreary waste of cold greenish grey,—the landscape and the water almost like a dim sketch in neutral tints; and the dark, cold-looking waves surged heavily up on the beach with a sullen swell, presaging bleak and wintry days. Heavy purple clouds lay horizontally across the sky, and behind them a soft band of saffron light showed almost lurid against the darkness. The sullen haziness of the evening seemed in harmony with the troubled atmosphere that brooded over the land, and with the anxiety that lay heavy at the hearts of the girls. Even Marjorie's spirits seemed to fail, as they stood watching the long roll of the grey waves on the sand, and at last, with a chill shiver, as much mental as physical, turned homeward. They met Nannie, as they approached the house, thoughtfully collecting an armful of dead wood to make up a fire for the

"lassies." It was soon blazing and crackling in the wide fire-place, and, with the tea-table drawn up in front of it, the girls began to feel brighter ; even though the rain, coming down at last, began to plash heavily against the window-panes.

While they listened to the dreary sounds of wind and rain without, talking a little now and then, though their hearts were wandering far away, Bruno's sudden barking,—followed by a little bustle and noise at the back-door, and by Nannie's voice raised in sudden ejaculation,—announced the arrival of an unexpected visitor. Lilius, supposing it must be her father, was about to rush to the door to welcome him, when it opened, and Captain Percival appeared, his dark-blue military cloak drenched with rain, the drops of which were glistening, too, on his auburn hair and whiskers. He was greeted with surprised pleasure ; for the unexpected arrival from the world without, bearing intelligence of so much that they were eager to know, could not but be most welcome. Even Lilius forgot, for the time, her private cause for displeasure with Percival, and greeted him warmly, asking how he came there in such a storm.

"It is just the storm which must be my excuse for appearing here so late ;" he replied, smiling, and evidently gratified by his cordial reception. He then hastily explained that General Brock and the expedition had just returned, by the schooner Chippawa, across Lake Erie, and

were by this time at Fort George. He himself had been sent round from Fort Erie by a circuitous route with despatches for the outposts, and finding himself not far from Oakridge, had made a little *detour*, in order to give his friend Major Meredith the news, claim his hospitality for the night, and push on to Newark in the morning. The state of the roads along which he had to pick his way, and the darkness of the evening, making it impossible to see a yard before him, had not only very much delayed his progress, but had made him only too glad to seek, for himself and his exhausted horse, a shelter at The Elms.

Lilias explained that her father was absent at Newark, but gave Captain Percival a courteous and hospitable greeting. Marjorie could hardly repress her eagerness till the necessary civilities had been gone through, and then came her eager questions. The first, of course, was for the welfare of her father and brother, and her next, on being assured of that—"What success?"

"Splendid success!" exclaimed he exultingly. "Detroit captured; Hull driven from his position and compelled to capitulate! Cannon, stores, colours, and nearly three thousand prisoners surrendered, and the ball at our feet, to go on and crush the last vestige of the invasion!"

Marjorie's delight was uncontrollable. She could hardly refrain from a "hurrah!" and Lilias, though quieter in her manifestation of it, felt hardly less emotion. Both were eager to know the particulars, and when Percival had

seen the comfort of his tired horse secured, and had removed his wet cloak and taken some needed refreshment, both girls listened with fascinated ears to his recital of the adventures of the expedition. It was suprising, indeed, as Liliás could not help inwardly remarking, what a transformation had come over Percival—how changed he seemed from the indifferent, coldly polite, *blasé* young man he had appeared on his first arrival. *Now*, genuine enthusiasm animated his voice and sparkled in his eye; even his tones seemed to have a deeper vibration, and as Liliás noted the effect of his plunge into the real military work which was so congenial to him, she could not wonder that he had welcomed the advent of war. Yet it was not wholly his military experiences, congenial as they were, which had made the difference. Contact with a character so noble as that of Brock, which exercised a strong influence on all who came in contact with him, had done much to rouse a spirit not naturally ignoble, but enervated by idleness and inaction. His observation of the General's high, unselfish aims, and whole-souled devotion to duty, had shown him the comparative pettiness of his own self-centred motives, even in his dreams of gallantly serving his country and winning military glory. He had not yet come to feel the true central force of action, the constraining power, which, acting alike through heart and mind, can alone round the life into a beautiful harmony. But he was, at least, beginning to appreciate its effects in the

lives of others, and to feel, with a vague dissatisfaction and longing, the want of it in his own. And the secret influence of Lilius herself, unconscious as it was, had had no small share in producing this effect.

As they listened, now, to his graphic account of the progress of the expedition, the girls could see in imagination the scenes he described ;—could follow the troops in their march from Burlington Bay to Long Point, on Lake Erie ;—in their toilsome four days and nights of rowing in open boats over the storm-tossed waves of the lake, the rain pouring down upon them, and the unsheltered coast presenting formidable and often unseen dangers. “And,” added Percival, with natural satisfaction, “the General declared that he had never seen troops who could endure the fatigue and the bad weather with greater cheerfulness, and that the conduct of the little band throughout had excited his admiration. As for your father, Miss McLeod, none of your Ossianic heroes could have braved storm and danger and exposure with more utter indifference ! With his plaid wrapped round him, he seemed to care no more for wind and waves than—the General himself.”

Marjorie's eyes glistened with a moist sparkle ; for she was very proud of her brave, stately, soldierly father ; proud, too, of the other brave man in whom her own pure disinterested devotion gave her a certain sense of property.

Then Percival went on to tell them of the landing at Amherstburg, where General Brock had, for the first time,

met the Shawnee Chief, Tecumseh, and where the two Generals, the British and the Indian one,—not a little resembling each other in some of their essential and noble characteristics—had concerted their plan of operation against the American force.

“They seemed to take to each other instantly,” said Percival. “Tecumseh seemed impressed with General Brock’s ability and courage at once, as one could see in his glistening eyes and his eagerness to act with him, though of course he said very little at the parley. I never saw an Indian that came up so much to my idea of Campbell’s ‘noble savage.’ He’s a good-looking fellow,—has a light copper-coloured complexion, an oval face with bright hazel eyes full of cheerfulness, energy, and decision, and a figure not very tall, but slender and finely proportioned. He had no tawdry ornaments of paint or beads, but a plain deer-skin costume, the seams decorated with neatly cut fringes, a red kerchief tied round his head, with an eagle feather fastened in it, and on his feet leather moccasins, richly embroidered with dyed porcupine quills. The only ornaments about him were three small silver crowns or coronets suspended from his aquiline nose,—having a very odd effect,—and around his neck, hanging by a coloured string of wampun, a large silver medallion of old George the Third, which he told us an ancestor of his had received from Lord Dorchester. But he was as dignified as an emperor in stars and orders, and his keen

hawk-like eye looked as if it took in everything with one silent glance. The General asked him whether his people could be got to refrain from drinking spirits, and Tecumseh told him that they had, one and all, before leaving their wigwams on the Wabash, promised not to touch it till they had humbled the 'Big Knives,' as they called the Americans. You should have seen how pleased the General looked, and with what approval and dignity he said : 'Adhere to this resolution and you must conquer.'

Percival proceeded to describe the crossing at Detroit, when General Brock stood erect in his canoe, purposely exposing himself, with a noble rashness, in order to inspire his troops with courage, and win the confidence of his Indian allies. The Indian Chief described him afterwards in one of his eloquent orations as "the pale-faced warrior, who, standing erect in the bow of his canoe, led the way to battle." An expedition thus led could hardly fail to conquer. Brock had seized his opportunity ; and by the judicious concerted action of his handful of troops—only about seven hundred in all,—"four hundred of whom were Canadian militia disguised as red-coats," and of his Indian allies, the enemy were driven into their fort, where they speedily capitulated. By the terms of the capitulation they surrendered their entire force, consisting of about 2,500 troops, including some artillery and cavalry, with a stand of colours, thirty-three pieces of cannon, a quantity of stores and the military chest. A vessel of war was in-

cluded in the surrender, by which the important cession of the Michigan territory and Fort Detroit was also made to the British Government. And all this was secured, as General Brock observed in one of his despatches, "without the sacrifice of a single drop of British blood," and indeed, it must be added, without any great amount of bloodshed even on the American side. The rout was a most complete one, striking dismay to the hearts of the invaders, "blasting," as an American historian says, "the prospects of the first campaign," animating and giving confidence to the militia, which had now seen its first engagement; and winning for the General, who was himself surprised at the ease of his conquest, the warmest admiration of the Canadian people. In its completeness and in its results it was no less decisive and important, as regarded the success of the campaign, than was the victory of Salamanca, gained by Wellington over Marmont less than a month previous, as regarded that of the Peninsular War.

As Percival enthusiastically declared:—"Brock had only to go on as he had begun," in order to free Canada finally in the course of a few weeks from the disturbers of her peace. And, although very much against his will, the General was not permitted to do this, yet it is not too much to say this "single field" *did* "turn the chance of war;" that by cheering and encouraging the people, securing the support of wavering Indian tribes, and retarding the American operations for nearly a year, it was in no

small degree instrumental in eventually securing the preservation of Upper Canada to the British Crown.

Nor had the victory been sullied by a single departure from clemency and humanity. Brock had permitted the American militia to retire unmolested to their homes ; while he treated with all possible kindness and consideration the regular soldiers, who were, of course, detained as prisoners of war, and whose confiscated weapons were a most timely boon for the further arming of the Canadian militia. Even the Indians, usually so barbarous in their warfare, had been restrained from committing a solitary act of cruelty. This was chiefly owing to the unbounded influence that General Brock had acquired over his savage allies by the chivalrous dash and promptness which had crowned his expedition with such speedy and brilliant success, and to the earnestness with which he used his influence to restrain their naturally ferocious impulses. In his general orders issued at Detroit, he told them that in nothing could they testify more strongly their love to the King, their great father, than in following the dictates of honour and humanity. And in Tecumseh he found an efficient supporter. Unsparing as the Chief was in battle, he was humane to the wounded, and contemptuously tolerant towards the prisoners, of whom he said to General Brock, that "he despised them too much to meddle with them !"

Captain Percival added, to complete his animated

account of a warrior of a type so new to him, a description of his answering some of the General's topographical enquiries by throwing himself on the ground, and tracing with his knife, upon a sheet of bark, a plan of the country, with all its natural features of hills, woods, rivers and marshes, which the General declared was as clear and intelligible as a surveyor's map. Furthermore, Percival told them how, after the surrender of Detroit, General Brock had taken off his own sash and publicly adorned the Chief with it, as a special mark of honour; and how, notwithstanding the evident gratification with which he received it, he appeared next day without it, when it was found that, not wishing to wear the badge of distinction in the presence of one whom he esteemed an abler as well as an older warrior, he had transferred it to the Wyandot Chief Roundhead. Indeed Percival seemed thoroughly fascinated by the Indian Chief, who was truly one of the heroes of the war; and seemed never to tire of speaking of one of whom he could hardly find words sufficient to express his admiration.

Marjorie and Liliac became so absorbed in the recital of events so vitally interesting to them, that they hardly knew how the hours passed, till roused with a start—as Captain Percival, on consulting his watch, declared that it was almost midnight, and that he was beginning to feel the effects of excitement and fatigue. Old Nannie, who had managed, by coming in now and then, to hear a good deal

of the story, in which she was as much interested as the others, had in the intervals prepared his room, which, he laughingly remarked, would be an agreeable contrast to the sleeping accommodation of the camp, to which he had been accustomed of late. He bade the girls good-bye, as well as good-night, and before the broad morning sunshine had awakened them from their slumbers he was well on his way to Newark.

CHAPTER XIV.

A SUNSET MEETING.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be!

Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.

O love, if death be sweeter, let me die."

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;

I needs must follow death, who calls for me;

Call and I follow, I follow; let me die."

MUCH against the will of General Brock, the month of September, after his return to the Niagara frontier, passed in forced and reluctant inactivity. He was burning to follow up his success by pressing on upon the invading forces in their half-prepared condition; and—as he firmly believed he could,—make a clean sweep of the invasion at once and forever. But, unfortunately, Fabian counsels prevailed at headquarters, and an armistice was granted, just sufficing to give the Americans time to rally from the discouraging effect of the capture of Detroit, to complete their half-arranged plans and preparations, to concentrate formidable masses of men at the chief points of attack, and to prepare for their subsequent successes on Lake Ontario; while it sent eight hundred

Indians, assembled and eager to fight on the side of the British, in disgust to their own homes. But the decree had gone forth, and the obedient soldier could only submit, though he chafed at the situation. It was no light trial to his prompt energetic nature to lie by with tied hands and watch the force under General Van Rensselaer, on the opposite side of the river, growing daily more and more formidable, while he was absolutely prevented from taking a single measure even to impede the warlike preparations. He was positively restricted to purely defensive measures, and even when, about the middle of September, the American outposts began to fire across the river, he felt it his duty to discountenance the return firing which this naturally evoked. So irrepressible, indeed, was the warlike spirit of the American troops, that a flag of truce which General Brock sent across with a letter to General Rensselaer, on the sixteenth of September, was repeatedly fired upon while crossing,—an occurrence not common in civilized warfare.

For the news of the revocation by the English Government of the decrees in Council that had been the professed *casus belli*, which took place, by a curious coincidence, almost or exactly simultaneously with the declaration of war at Washington, had had no perceptible effect in modifying the hostile intentions of the Americans. It was in this hope that Sir George Prevost, on hearing of the revocation, had proposed suspension of hostilities

until the sentiments of the American Government should be known on the subject. But the American people were now too eager for invasion—too keenly desirous for the coveted prize, to go back. Henry Clay had declared in Congress that he wished “never to see peace” till England had been driven from the continent of America; and if this was the sentiment of a senator, it is easy to imagine the feelings of the excited people, who had imagined the enterprise to be one which had only to be undertaken in order to succeed.

On the eighteenth of September General Brock wrote to his brother :

“A river about five hundred yards wide divides the troops. My instructions oblige me to adopt only defensive measures, and I have evinced greater forbearance than was ever practised on any former occasion. It is thought that, without the aid of the sword, the American people may be brought to a due sense of their own interest. I firmly believe that I could, at this moment, sweep everything before me between Fort Niagara and Buffalo. The militia, being principally composed of enraged democrats, are more ardent and anxious to engage, but they have neither subordination nor discipline. They die very fast. It is certainly singular that we should be two months in a state of warfare, and that along the widely extended frontier not a single death, either natural or by the sword, should have occurred among the troops under my command; nor has a single desertion taken place.”

But as the force on the Niagara frontier had now reached the magnitude of six thousand men, it was evident that open hostilities must ere long break out, and that an attack might at any moment be expected. And for this General Brock watched with untiring vigilance ; keeping his troops, volunteer and regular, in a state of thoroughly drilled readiness, and having a portion of the 49th, with a body of militia, on guard at Queenston Heights, where the first attack might be expected.

Marjorie had returned home early in September, bringing with her her friend, whom she insisted on carrying off from the loneliness of a home where her father—now fully engrossed with his military duties on the frontier—could hardly ever be. Liliass soon regained both strength and comparative cheerfulness in the more lively atmosphere of Dunlathmon, where the boys were always coming and going with scraps of the latest news ; where her father came whenever he could ; where Marjorie and Flora with their lively talk kept her from overmuch thought and anxiety ; and where some of the officers, stationed so near, were always glad to spend a pleasant hour.

One guest, however, and that the one her heart most longed to see, never presented himself, although Marjorie had privately given him to understand that he would be a welcome visitor. But Ernest Heathcote had determined not to meet Liliass again until he had fully exculpated himself from the charge which he knew Captain Percival

had brought against him, and which, he also knew, Major Meredith believed. He felt it would not be treating the Major honourably to take advantage of the opportunity he might have of seeing Lillias against his will ; and to Lillias, despite her longings, it was a great relief that he did not attempt to see her while her father's prohibition remained in force.

It was a good while before Ernest could find an opportunity of speaking to Captain Percival on the subject, as he desired. When he did, Percival was surprised at the manly independence, and even dignity of bearing, shown by the young man, against whom he had nourished a contemptuous dislike, born—though he would hardly have confessed it—of latent jealousy. Ernest had indeed gained a good deal, under the discipline of the last few months, in both mental and physical energy. His military training had strengthened and developed his physical constitution, and this cause, combined with his being drawn out from his former studious and contemplative habits to encounter the exigencies of outward life, gave him, along with added erectness of carriage, an amount of *aplomb* and freedom of bearing which advantageously replaced the shy constraint of manner so apt to grow about one who leads a recluse and studious life. He spoke to Percival firmly and quietly about the untruth of the slander that he had repeated, indicating rather than expressing the injustice of giving currency to such ill-

authorized reports. Percival could not resist the conviction which Ernest's emphatic repudiation of the whole charge brought home to his reluctant mind. And the generosity and sense of justice which, after all, he possessed when his better nature prevailed, impelled him frankly to own that he had been in the wrong, and to promise spontaneously the reparation of expressing to Major Meredith and Liliass his conviction that the whole story was utterly baseless.

But it was some time before his military engagements would permit him to see either Liliass or her father,—the latter being at Newark, while Percival was engaged in moving from place to place along the frontier, trying to trace, as far as possible, the movements of the enemy. And a natural reluctance for the self-imposed task made him less energetic in seeking an opportunity, and even in seeking the society of Liliass, than he might otherwise have been. Even Marjorie had remarked, somewhat discontentedly, how seldom they saw Captain Percival now, and, with much more discontent, that they never saw Ernest Heathcote at all ! It was strange how times of war altered people, she said, with a rather hasty generalization. It seemed the more strange, because Ernest was, by the end of September, bivouacked with his company at Queenston Heights, which became the centre of interest about the first or second week of October.

Early on the morning of the ninth of that month, the

British brig of war "Detroit" and the private brig "Caledonia" were boarded and captured opposite Fort Erie by Lieutenant Elliott, of the American Navy, who was then at Black Rock engaged in fitting out schooners for the American service on Lake Erie; a work which could hardly have been carried out in General Brock's close vicinity had he not so unfortunately been restricted to defensive measures. The brig of war was carrying down forty prisoners of war, with some cannon, small arms and shot,—all results of the capture of Detroit; the "Caledonia" was laden with furs belonging to the North-West Company. The American attacking force, including the forty prisoners, who of course joined their countrymen, amounted to 140, while the crews of the brigs, consisting of Canadian seamen and militia, numbered less than half their assailants. The "Caledonia" was carried off to Black Rock and her cargo secured, but the operation of the Canadian batteries compelled the captors to run the "Detroit" aground on Squaw Island. There she lay till evening, when, just as General Brock, who reached the spot soon after sunset, was making arrangements to recover her, she was boarded by the enemy and set on fire.

Captain Percival, who had accompanied General Brock and his staff to the spot, stood near the General, as the lurid flames that quickly wrapped the devoted brig rose vividly red in the soft dimness of the early twilight, against the dark outlines of the American shore, almost neutralizing

the still pale light of the young October moon. The little knot of officers looked on with grave faces. They knew that this disaster meant a good deal to them in the critical position of affairs. It was not only the material loss of vessels and arms, though *that* was much in the country's present need ; but also the encouragement which the affair must give to the Americans, who had been exerting themselves to the utmost to gain a naval superiority on the lakes ; and who would receive from this success fresh hopes and stimulus to immediate invasion. General Brock felt, as he wrote shortly after, that " the event is particularly unfortunate, and may reduce us to incalculable distress." However, his mind soon turned to the brighter side. " It is one consolation, at least," he said, " that the brig has escaped the enemy ! Certainly his conduct after his first essay has not entitled him to so rich a prize."

Then, to cheer up somewhat the drooping spirits of his comrades, he changed the subject to the victory of Salamanca, news of which had just arrived, and which, with its bearing on the war in Spain, the little party proceeded to discuss as they turned to seek their quarters for the night at Fort Erie.

This naval success did, as the General had foreboded, greatly increase the eagerness of the American troops for invasion, and the impatience of the men to " clear out the British frontier right off." Foreseeing this, General Brock wrote copious instructions to the officers command-

ing at the different frontier posts, explaining probable points of attack and the best method of procedure in the event of its taking place. In these instructions he made the remark justified by the events of the war : " If we weigh well the character of our enemy, we shall find him more disposed to brave the impediments of nature, when they afford him a probability of accomplishing his end by surprise, in preference to the certainty of encountering British troops ready formed for his reception."

These instructions had been barely issued when the attempted attack of the eleventh, at Queenston, which failed by reason of lack of boats, and wet, tempestuous weather, showed the enemy's intention of speedily bringing matters to a crisis. The inmates of Dunlathmon were of course anxiously watching the progress of affairs, prepared in case of need to take refuge at Fort George ; an extreme contingency, however, of which they would hardly admit the possibility. The rainy, gloomy weather, too, of the eleventh, and the morning of the twelfth, seemed to increase the weight of anxiety that rested on their spirits. On the afternoon of the latter, however, the rain ceased, and the sun broke out in soft October brilliancy from a background of pale blue sky and softest purple cloud. The dim haze of an Indian summer rested with an idealizing grace on the gorgeous tints of the forest, making gold and crimson blend together in the most exquisite confusion of rich and delicate hues. As the evening drew on,

a blood-red sun, looming softly crimson through the intervening haze, sank slowly among horizontal bars of rosy and purple sunset clouds,—darting long level rays of ruddy light through the pine trees of Dunlathmon, which looked duskiest than ever in contrast with the rest of the gorgeously tinted woods, and suffusing the gnarled trunks in its way with a rich ruby glow.

Lilias had wandered out alone in the sunset, to tranquillize the nervous agitation she was feeling by a solitary walk among the soothing influences of nature, which has always a word for the troubled heart, if it will listen. She carried with her her little pocket Testament, in which she liked at times to read some of the cheering words of hope and comfort which, spoken beside the lilies of Jordan, or amid the storm-tossed waves of the Sea of Galilee, or under the olives of Bethany, come with so soothing a message to the anxious and suffering, and often seem to glow forth brightly, like “the bow in the cloud,” from the deepest shades of outward darkness. For, now that a critical moment was believed to be imminent,—that a few hours might imperil the lives of those she loved best, visions of what *might* be would haunt her aching sight; would weigh down her heart with sickening fear and suspense, which needed a higher than human comfort to lighten it. She had come out on the avenue near the gate, and was proceeding slowly towards the house, enjoying the sweet softness of the air, laden with the peculiar autumn scent of the

dying leaves, when she heard a horse's hoofs behind her, and, turning, she saw Captain Percival, mounted on Hector, galloping up. He dismounted when he reached her, and walked slowly on by her side, his horse's bridle thrown over his arm.

He explained at once that his errand was principally to see her ; and then, that he might swallow the bitter pill of reparation as speedily as possible, he plunged at once into a rapid explanation of his promise to clear Heathcote from an unjust charge which he had, unwitting of its injustice, brought against him.

Lilias' cheek flushed deeply as he proceeded, and she listened silently with downcast eyes, feeling as if the frank reparation almost more than cancelled the offence. When he paused she thanked him briefly, and ventured, though with some effort, to ask whether he had given the same explanation to her father.

"Yes," he replied, "I did so some days ago. I might have left it to him to tell you. But," he added, in a tone of such earnest gravity that she could hardly believe it to be the careless Percival who spoke, "this is a time for settling old scores, for no one knows where he may be by this time to-morrow. Possibly," he added in a lighter tone, "food for the American eagle."

"You think, then, that there is going to be an attack?" said Lilias, in a voice which she tried in vain to keep from being slightly tremulous.

"I am sure of it. In fact, it is inevitable. The Americans must do something to keep the troops in good humour. We should have had them over yesterday if they had had boats, and I see they have a good many now. I am on my way to Newark now, to apprise the General that he must be ready for an early start."

Lilias was silent. So many thoughts and emotions were crowding upon her mind that she did not find it easy to speak.

Presently Captain Percival continued, in a tone that sought to conceal emotion by an appearance of carelessness,—“So I thought I should like to see you again, Miss Meredith. It may be a long good-bye, you know.”

“I hope *not*,” said Lilias, with frank earnestness.

“Oh, as for that,” he replied, in the same would-be careless tone, “I don’t expect any one to care for *me*, even if I *do* serve my country by presenting it with my life! The poorest volunteer that falls will cause mourning enough; but who will care for the British soldier? He is only ‘doing his duty!’”

Lilias felt throroughly pained at the bitter, almost reckless tone in which he concluded his speech, and hastened to say the only soothing thing she could think of.

“I know there will be *some* who will care,” she said, gently. She was thinking of a letter she had recently received from her cousin, in which she could clearly see that the uppermost thought was Captain Percival and his

welfare, although the writer had evidently tried to conceal it, and seemed to think she had succeeded.

Captain Percival's expression changed, instantly, to one of eager interest, and he bent forward and said, in a low tone of peculiar meaning—

“If I could hope that *you* cared, Miss Meredith, it would make life a different thing to me ! I think I might be tempted to grudge it to my country yet !”

His tone and manner forced upon Lillas, with a quick pang of pained surprise, his unmistakeable meaning. In her agitation and embarrassment, and her eagerness to undeceive him, she rushed into an explanation which she would otherwise scarcely have ventured upon, saying hurriedly—

“I meant—I was thinking of—my cousin Marian ; I thought”—but here she stopped. She could not bring herself to explain farther.

Captain Percival's face fell. It was his turn now to be surprised.

“Thought—that I cared for your cousin ? Lillas !—Miss Meredith ! how did you take up such an impression ?”

“I hardly know ; I beg your pardon,” Lillas replied, in a low tone.

Captain Percival was silent for a few moments, then he began resolutely—somewhat bitterly :

“I will tell you frankly. I *did* care for your cousin once ; nay, was fool enough to think she cared for *me* !

But she treated me in such a way as compelled me to think I was mistaken, so I gave her up, once and for all. I did not care that she should have the triumph of a scornful rejection, and so—saved her the trouble !”

“ But you may have mistaken her,” said Lillas, in a low tone. “ Indeed, I think you must have done so !”

“ Not likely. You don’t know your cousin, Miss Meredith, and I do ! But I know I am not mistaken in thinking that the man that wins *you* will be a happy one ! Is there *no* hope for me, Lillas ?” he said in a voice almost inaudible from agitation, for something in the girl’s look and manner dashed all his hopes.

Lillas could find no words. Her heart sank at the pain she felt she must give. She could only shake her head faintly with averted glance.

“ But,—if there is no one else !” he persisted, “ there might be hope for me in time, that is, if the chance of war spares my life. With the hope of having you by my side, my life would be something different from what it has ever been before !”

Lillas’ heart throbbed painfully, and her face burned with the hot colour that suffused it. There *was* some one else, but how could she avow to him a preference unconfessed to the object of it,—nay, the avowal of which had never been asked for by the one most concerned !

But he understood her silence. “ Then it is so,” he said gloomily. “ I might have known ! It would be idle

to say I envy him. Well, perhaps it is so much the better ! *Now* I can do my duty all the more freely, not tempted by any desire of preserving a life for which there will be no one to mourn, since I have no friend who cares enough for me to regret me particularly !”

“There will,” exclaimed Liliás, earnestly ; “my father is your warm friend, and I too ! and besides, Captain Percival,” she said, timidly, but as though compelled by a strong impulse,—“you have *another* Friend, who cares for you more than any one else could do.”

He understood her meaning, and replied gravely, “Not for me, for I have never cared for Him ! I know *you* do, for I have noticed more than you think ; and so, I am sure, does General Brock ; and so did my mother, as I can remember, though it is long since she died. But I have never cared to think of these things. Why, Miss Meredith, I hardly ever open a Bible, and to begin now, when death may be at hand, would seem cowardly. No, it is too late for me now !”

“It is *never* too late,”—exclaimed Liliás emphatically, forced out of all shyness and self-consciousness by the strong feeling of the moment. “If you had an earthly friend who loved you more than you could think, but whom you had misunderstood and neglected, would it not be the best reparation you could make, just to go and tell him so, and how sorry you were ? And He always wants us to return to Him, however late it may be ! He never

casts out any one who will come to Him. Captain Percival," she added, half-hesitatingly taking from her pocket the little Testament she had been reading, "won't you take this and read some of His own words for yourself?"

Percival's face had softened while she spoke; she had touched chords that had responded—feelings long lying dormant. "I will—for *your* sake, at any rate;" he said, as he took the little book? "and perhaps it may do me more good than I think. Thank you a thousand times for all your kindness to me, which I did not deserve," he added, as he thought of the pain he must have caused her by prejudicing her father against Ernest. "And now, good-bye! you will never know all the good you have done me, even if ——"

He did not finish his sentence; but he stooped and kissed her hand, which he had taken and was holding in his. In her sympathy and compassion for him she allowed him to hold it unresistingly. In after years she was glad of this, as of every kindness she had ever shown him; but that night, within half an hour, she bitterly regretted it. For neither Percival nor she had seen a figure which was approaching them from the direction of the house, on which they had turned their backs—the figure of Ernest Heathcote, who, longing too for one last word with Liliass before the expected engagement, after the long interval of suspended intercourse, had walked across to Dunlathmon by a short cut through the woods,

and had been told he should find Liliás somewhere about the grounds. When he came in sight of her whom he sought, standing with her hand in Percival's, he stopped, struck by a sudden pang ; but when he saw Percival raise her hand to his lips, he waited no longer, but striking off for the short cut by which he had come, was quickly out of sight, feeling as if all that made life worth having was over for him for ever.

Captain Percival said no more, but mounted his horse in silence and rode off, slowly and sadly, with a respectful salute. Liliás turned and walked slowly to the house, her mind still full of the agitating interview just over, and the regret it had awakened. Was she sorry, after all, that she could not love this man, in many respects so attractive—so fitted to realize the ideal of a maiden's fancy ? Perhaps any true-hearted girl must always feel something of this regret when a deep and honest affection, whose worth she can fully appreciate, has been laid at her feet in vain ! But her heart was unshakenly true to the thought of Ernest, whose image lay enshrined in its depths too deep for any passing ripple of feeling to affect.

As she entered the house Marjorie met her. " Have you not seen Ernest Heathcote ? " she said. " He went out to look for you."

" Ernest ! " exclaimed Liliás. " Was *he* here ? "

" Yes, just a few minutes ago ; he went to find you. If you came by the avenue, you must have met him."

Lilias turned very white. A fear had taken possession of her which she could not shake off. She stood at the door for a short time, vainly hoping to discover Ernest in the distance. At last that hope failed. He must have seen her with Captain Percival, and she could divine the impression under which he had gone away without disturbing them. It was too much; and, overstrained by the double agitation, she rushed to her room and gave way to a burst of bitter tears. It was hard! The morrow with all its uncertainties,—and no opportunity of a single word of explanation or farewell; with the added pain of feeling that Ernest, under a false impression, might be suffering even more than she was.

As the twilight drew on, Major Meredith came in to talk gravely with Colonel McLeod over the prospects of the morrow, and as all were full of the deep anxieties of the time, no one noticed or wondered at Lilias' pale, tear-stained face. But she did not mention her interview with Captain Percival, even to Marjorie.

CHAPTER XV.

QUEENSTON HEIGHTS.

"They bore him bare-faced on the bier,
And on his grave rains many a tear,
For he is dead—
He never will come again."

THE morning of the thirteenth of October, 1812, rose fair and bright, with almost the softness and warmth of a June morning in the balmy air, misty with the soft, exquisite haze of Indian summer. Through it, seen from the American shore, the bold ridge of Queenston Heights gleamed with a glory of colour not usually its own, the rugged rocks, besprent with rich dashes of crimson, gold and purple, the oak's rich shades of russet and crimson, the golden tresses of the birch, and the scarlet glow of the maple, the brilliant hues of the sumach burning in blood-red crimson and gold, and the deeper, even more gorgeous tints of the Virginia Creeper, hanging in rich festoons over the rough, dark precipices, soon to be dyed with stains of a more fatal and ominous crimson.

For, even before the first early sunbeams had pierced through the haze and lighted up the glowing tints of forest and cliff, a number of small boats had silently stolen

across in the grey dawn, from the American shore, and the "forlorn hope" of the invaders, under Colonel Van Rensselaer, had made good their landing on Canadian ground. More and more troops followed, till, with very little loss, considerably more than a thousand American soldiers and militia confronted the small British force at the outposts. The fire of two eighteen-pounders and some smaller field-pieces on the American side covered the passage of the boats and prevented its being effectually opposed; but, once landed, all further progress was desperately resisted, and the hoarse rattle of musketry blended with the firm tones of the British words of command, the sturdy British cheer, the groans of the fallen, and the rallying cry of the American officers—"On men! on! for the honour of America;" while over all boomed at intervals the sullen thunder of the British eighteen-pounder on a spur of the heights, and a carronade a mile or so below. Van Rensselaer was soon desperately wounded, as well as others on both sides, of names less known. All was confusion,—grim hand-to-hand fighting,—blind, desperate struggle to gain or keep the strong position, when General Brock, who had been aroused at Fort George by the first sound of firing, galloped up on his gallant charger Alfred, at the head of his suite, and, passing up the hill in front of the light company, and under a heavy fire of artillery and musketry, never drew rein until he had reached the field-work, where he dismounted to survey through his telescope the aspect of the engagement.

But a volley from a height above, gallantly gained by a small detachment of the enemy which had reached it unobserved, interrupted his survey, and drove him and his suite, without time to remount, from the vicinity of the battery. A British detachment charged the adventurous Americans, who being driven back, charged again; and in the confused struggle which followed, assailants and assailed were driven pell-mell to the very edge of the precipice, with the rushing river sheer beneath. There, some of the American officers, appalled by the situation, were on the point of raising the white flag of surrender. But Captain Wool, who had led the party up the height, tore it down, and rallied his discouraged troops to renewed exertions.

A fierce hand-to-hand struggle followed. For generalship and military tactics there was neither room nor opportunity. All that General Brock could do at such a crisis was to fight like one of his own officers, and press on,—conspicuous as he was by his dress, height and bearing,—as might have been expected of one who had said: "How can I expect the men to follow where I am afraid to lead?" It has been thought that his military ardour transported him beyond all considerations of prudence or caution; yet, ardent, unhesitating devotion to a cause is often of far more avail than a more prudential course; and a failure on his part to set the example of fearless self-devotion might have been disastrous to the fortunes of the day. He

was pointing to the hill, and the words "Push on the York Volunteers!" were on his lips, when a ball, too well directed, struck him in the right breast, and laid low the hope and stay of Canada, and as brave and heroic a leader as ever bled for Britain on any world-renowned battle-field. The comparative obscurity of the campaign in which he fell has prevented his name from being widely known to fame, but it has long been enshrined as a precious memory by the grateful people amidst whom was sacrificed a life so noble, and to them, as it seemed at the time, so indispensable.

During most of that October day the sanguinary contest went on, among the beetling precipices and the many-hued foliage, above which curled the significant blue wreaths of smoke, and resounded the rattle of musketry. During an interval after the fall of Brock, and that of his gallant aide-de-camp, Colonel McDonell, who was struck down in leading the York Volunteers up the hill in obedience to the General's last words, there was a lull of some hours, during which the Americans retained their exposed and dangerous post on the hill, while the little body of British troops drew up on the outskirts of the village to await reinforcements. General Sheaffe was already far on his way from Fort George, at the head of some three hundred regulars of the 41st and 49th, two companies of militia and some Indians, when he heard the sad tidings of the fall of his chief, which urged him forward with fresh

eagerness to avenge so terrible a loss. He brought his troops out on the heights about two miles to the west of Queenston, in order to outflank and hem in the Americans, whose comrades in arms on the other shore declined to reinforce them in their critical position on the hill—with precipitous crags and the river behind them, and a semicircle of foes gradually closing in around. On arriving at the heights, Sheaffe's forces were joined by Brant and Norton with their Indian followers, and some two hundred volunteer militia from Chippawa. The British and Canadian forces were about eight hundred now,—opposed to nearly double the number of Americans, who fought gallantly even when, at last, they felt that they fought hopelessly. For British pluck and Canadian patriotism could hardly fail, in such circumstances, to triumph, even over superior numbers; and at last, amid the clouds of smoke and dust that almost screened the battle from view,—amid Indian yells, fierce shouts and execrations, groans and outcries, the irresistible impulse of the conquering force bore down the last desperate charge of the invaders, and the survivors were compelled to rapid or rather headlong retreat. Had Brock lived, the terrors and the slaughter of that retreat would not, in all probability, have been nearly so great. But his unbounded influence over his Indian allies was missed already, and many a life, which might otherwise have been spared, was sacrificed by the exasperated warriors out of vengeance for

the lamented loss of the British commander. To escape these dreaded enemies, many, cut off in attempting a retreat, threw themselves over the cliffs, and, losing their hold of the bushes to which they clung, were dashed to pieces on the rocks below. Others, who gained the bank of the river, took to it in despair, and were drowned in endeavouring to swim across.

On the bank of the river, near where the Suspension Bridge has hung so long, the unconditional surrender was at last offered, which made General Wadsworth and *Colonel Scott with the surviving remnant of the American force,—about eleven hundred men,—prisoners of war, and, for the present, ended the invasion.

The family at Dunlathmon had been aroused at day-break by the sullen sound of firing and the rattle of musketry. Colonel McLeod and Major Meredith, who had been there all night, mounted and rode off in haste, accompanied by the lads, eager to see and participate in the fray. The female portion of the household, who had dressed hastily to bid the hurried, agitated “good-byes,” made a pretence of gathering around a comfortless breakfast-table, but to eat was impossible; the smallest morsel seemed to choke them. The long morning seemed interminable. The hours told by an old-fashioned sand-glass—for clocks were then a rare luxury in Canada, and the Colonel’s cumbrous watch was the only time-piece of the family,—

* Afterwards the well-known General Scott.

seemed so long that they looked again and again to assure themselves that the sand had not stopped running. Lilius wandered, arm-in-arm with Marjorie, about the grounds, trying to soothe the latter's excitement, which was uncontrollable; for she believed that she possessed something of the old Highland gift of "second sight," and was seized with a dire presentiment that General Brock would fall. They knew that the action must be a serious one, judging by the constant sound of the cannon and musketry; and the cannonade which was raking the river just below them was, for a time, almost incessant. When they could bear the ominous sounds no longer, they would try to escape from it partially by retreating into the house, where Mrs. McLeod sat, dismally enlarging upon the miseries of the situation, and wondering what they should do in case the Americans should effect a footing in the country, and how soon they should have to fly. The circumstance that so many precious lives were at stake was ignored, however, in words at least, by common consent. Present as it could not but be to their minds and hearts, they could not have borne to admit the fact in so many words. "I do wish your father would come and tell us how things are going on,"—Mrs. McLeod would reiterate; and no one would have suggested, for the world, that there was the slightest doubt as to his coming at last. Sometimes, when Lilius felt as if she could keep quiet no longer, she would betake herself to the solitude of her own room,

to seek the relief of tears and silent prayer. But Flora, whose playfulness had given way to pale and tearful terror, was sure to seek her out there, to claim for the hundredth time the wished-for assurance that "God would take care of her father and brothers."

At last came the first news from the field. Angus, the younger boy, rode home with a message from his father, and tidings which they were too fearful to ask. We know what fatal news he bore. For though it was General Brock's last wish that his fall should be kept secret from his men, his personal friends soon heard of it, and Colonel McLeod had been by his side at the time he breathed his last. Marjorie spoke not a word when she heard the sad tidings, but rushed away to shut herself up alone; and Lillas, with the true consideration which her own heart taught her, left her alone. To herself, indeed, the tidings were heavy enough. It seemed so stunning, so impossible, that he who had been at once the head and the animating spirit of the country's defence,—its trusted bulwark in a troublous time,—a leader so firm, so able, so successful, and but that morning so relied on, was no more—had passed away utterly, in a moment, from the country he guarded, from the soldiers he led! The young McLeods almost lost the sense of the public loss in that the revered and beloved friend; but Lillas, who had known him so intimately, felt even more for the blow which his death must be to the country at such a crisis.

When at last she ventured to intrude on Marjorie's privacy, she found that the girl, worn out by the morning's excitement, had sobbed herself to sleep, her favourite Ossian beside her, open at Malvina's lament for her lost hero. Lilius closed and removed it gently, determined that it should be out of sight for the present ; and left in its place *another* book of poems, open at words which contain the only true consolation in such times of extremity, when " human helpers fail and comforts flee :"—

" God is our refuge and strength ; a very present help in trouble."

Then she darkened the room as much as possible, and left it softly, that Marjorie might enjoy the longer the sleep which is often the best balm for a mourner.

At last "time and the hour wore through" the long anxious day of suspense and dread, and as the early evening closed in, the young McLeods, with the exception of the eldest, returned unhurt. They brought the intelligence that Major Meredith and their eldest brother had been wounded—not dangerously, however—and that their father had remained to watch over their comfort, as well as that of another friend, fatally wounded, and suffering terribly,—poor Colonel McDonell, General Brock's brave young aide-de-camp, who died next day. Colonel McLeod, who was to dine with General Sheaffe and the American General at the quarters of the latter, would stay all night with the invalids, and would have them carefully conveyed home on the following morning. Meanwhile, old Dinah

was despatched with black Cæsar to carry to the invalids all the comforts that could be extemporised for them, and to give to them, and any one else who might come in her way, the benefits of her good nursing. Marjorie and Liliás would gladly have gone too, but they knew that it was quite out of the question, and so did not even suggest it.

Of Percival and Heathcote the lads knew nothing, except that they had seen the former's company charging in the last fierce onset, and were sure that he was not in command. Payne, however, they had seen lying on the field, quite dead, where the fallen lay closest. But they spared the sickened hearts of their hearers any details of what they had seen on the blood-stained battle-ground. There,—amid rock and fern, under the quiet stars and the moon brightening through the hazy air, as the twilight descended over height and river, blending all objects into the same dusky hues,—lay many a strong manly form, the cherished pride and darling of a distant home, or the prop and stay of an unconscious household, stricken down by the death which had come in the iron shower, or at the bayonet's edge, in the mad rush of the hot conflict. The Americans, doubtless, believed that they were fighting for the national honour, and many had bravely won a soldier's honourable death. The fallen British soldiers deserved as much honour from their country as any who fell on the famous Continental battle-fields of

those eventful years; and none of the troops who, almost at that very time, were retiring discomfited from the hard-fought siege of Burgos had more faithfully borne out their country's high traditions of military glory. The Canadians who freely imperilled their lives there for King and Country, patriotically anxious to do their duty to both, and to protect the land which they claimed as their own—although history knows them not, and even the conflict in which they fell is almost unknown to fame,—were, many of them, as self-sacrificingly brave as the men who fought at Thermopylæ, or those who afterwards won the field of Waterloo. And, though they sleep now in silent or nameless graves, they have left to their country an imperishable memory, that may well thrill and reproach and arouse it, should it ever degenerately sink into a slothful or a craven policy, or into the deeper baseness of national corruption.

Few at Dunlathmon slept much that night; and Liliás, anxious and unable to rest, was on the watch next morning for her father's arrival long before it could possibly take place. She could not feel sure that he was not seriously wounded till she had seen him for herself. Of Ernest she had as yet heard nothing, and she was heart-sick from suspense. She could not ask about him, and if she could there was no one who could have given her any tidings. Weary with longing, and physically worn out with suspense and inward agitation, she was slowly walking along the avenue, ever watching for the expected

arrival. Suddenly a slight rustle among the fallen leaves made her turn her head, and she saw, through a mist that seemed to gather over her eyes,—Ernest,—apparently safe and well! The reaction after the preceding strain was too much. She grew white and dizzy, wavered, and seemed as if she would have fallen had not Ernest rushed forward to support her. Neither of them could ever quite tell how it was; in the excitement of the meeting the tide of feeling overleapt all ordinary barriers of conventionality, and they met, clasped in a warm, glad embrace. The relief of the moment seemed to wipe out every other thought than that they were together again,—all distrust and estrangement over,—and in the full, irrepressible, mutual consciousness of a strong overpowering affection.

Ernest had hurried on by a short cut leading him into the grounds through the woods. He had come, in no small degree impelled by the strength of his own desire to see Liliás, but also with the good excuse of acting as the herald of the invalids, that everything might be ready for their reception. It was a good while before the course of events could be disentangled from the rushing torrent of question and answer. One thing Liliás did *not* hear from Ernest, but afterwards from her father; who gratefully told her that, but for Ernest, "it would have been all over with him." He had been separated from his comrades and hemmed in, in a rocky angle, by two or three Americans; and in a moment or two his ineffectual resistance

must have left him at their mercy, when Ernest, who had been trying during the whole action to keep in view that familiar grey head, descried his danger and rushed to the spot. Happily, he met in his way the Indian Black Hawk, who never forgot the Major's kindness to his wife, and who, when aware of his danger, joined in the rescue with a fierce Indian yell before which the Major's assailants gave way at once without waiting for the stroke that followed ; and the brave old soldier, faint with the loss of blood from wounds in his arm and thigh, was at once assisted by Ernest to reach a place of safety.

But Ernest had much to tell Liliass about Captain Percival, though she did not hear all the particulars till long afterwards. Towards evening, in going over the deserted battle-field, Ernest had discovered him lying, wounded and unconscious, half hidden among rocks and foliage. Then there came to him a strong temptation, the strongest he had ever encountered. There lay his former enemy and his rival—as he believed, his successful rival,—the man who had injured him in the estimation of those for whose opinion he had cared the most ; who had stolen from him, as he thought, the treasure that was dearer to him than life ! Why should *he* be the man to care for him, perhaps to save his life ? Why not leave him, at least, to be cared for by others ? Why should he, of all men, seek to preserve a life which he had no reason to desire ? Were Percival to die there, might not Liliass be

his yet? All this flashed through his mind in a moment, with lightning rapidity. All the bitterness of a tortured heart, of crushed hope, rose up in him to give weight to the suggestions of the tempter. Then came a flash of purer light, and he shrank back, appalled, from the revelation of himself. He uttered one strong inward cry for help,—help to overcome *himself*; and the cry was answered, as every such sincere, earnest appeal will be. Ernest could never doubt, after that, the reality of the ever-present, unseen, all-powerful Helper. In the silent victory which, in those few moments, he won over the evil of his own spirit, there was far more of true heroism than in the reckless courage of despair with which he had been fighting all day; for it was the victory which, we are told, is better than the taking of a city. But Ernest knew well that it had not been gained through his own strength.

Hastily calling one of the surgeons to the spot, he carefully raised the unconscious Percival, and carried him, with the surgeon's assistance, to the nearest cottage, where, with some difficulty, he procured for him a comfortable bed. The surgeon examined and dressed his wounds, which he said must be fatal before many hours elapsed; and gradually Percival was restored, by means of stimulants, to consciousness.

Then happened one of those strange coalitions which sometimes take place suddenly between natures which have seemed mutually antagonistic, provided there is a

basis of nobility of character in both ; when the underlying sympathy overcomes the surface antagonism, and the mutual repulsion changes into mutual attraction, as each recognizes and appreciates what is good in the other. There were mutual explanations, and Percival, touched to the quick by the kind care of his formerly despised rival, told him enough of his own position with regard to Lilius to relieve Ernest from the haunting thought that had oppressed him during the past night and day, prompting him to expose his life on the field with a recklessness that made his escape with a slight wound seem really wonderful, and strengthened his belief in the ever-watchful Providence that constantly "shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will."

That solemn night spent beside the dying officer left its influence with Ernest all his life. They spoke, at intervals, of things about which men in health and vigour usually converse too little : of the transitoriness of things seen, and of the dark unknown into which the life of the one was passing ; and Ernest, at Percival's request, read to him from the Testament which Lilius had given him, some of the passages which tell most plainly of the Christian faith and hope which alone can light up that dark abyss. Percival's mind had been led of late to penetrate deeper, beyond the painted outside show which had made his world, than his careless spirit had ever done before. General Brock's example had shown him that a man may

do a soldier's duty all the more bravely and faithfully for having a higher aim than that of earthly glory—a nearer, closer helper and friend than any earthly one. And being led to contemplate, partly by the influence of Lilius, a purer and higher ideal, he had been brought to see something of the darkness of self surveyed in a ray of the light that is "inaccessible and full of glory." The overworked garrison chaplain had too much on his hands, that night, to visit all the sufferers, and did not find out Percival. But a better Teacher was near, unseen, to bring home to the eagerly attentive heart the sayings of Him who "spake as never man spake." Among these were the words: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life,"—with the precious lesson they enshrine; and as Percival's earthly life was ebbing away, he entered upon the possession of the better, the only true life of man, even the Eternal. To Ernest himself, the words he read in such solemn circumstances seemed to possess a power and force that they had never had before, and, coming as they did just after his recent inward struggle, they awoke thoughts and feelings that determined the current of his whole after-life.

Percival sent a kind, grateful message to Lilius, telling her that he did not grudge his life to Canada, especially now that he had found a better one than he had ever expected to know. "And," he added, smiling, "it is doing England just as good service as if I had fallen under Wellington, fighting in Spain!" He begged Ernest to

accept, as the only return he could make for his undeserved kindness, his horse, Hector. "Miss Meredith will sometimes ride him, I know," he said with a peculiarly pleasant smile, "and when she does, she will think kindly of Francis Percival."

Then, as death drew near, and his thoughts began to grow confused, they wandered away to his English home,—to the old mansion-house he should see no more,—to the daisy-sprinkled fields he had played in when a boy,—to the little ivy-covered village church where reposed the ashes of his ancestors. And, just before the last,—an old emotion seeming to re-establish its influence—he sent a short broken message to Marian Herbert; a message which Liliás sacredly treasured, and sent to her cousin just as it was spoken, and which, some weeks later, was read with a rush of blinding tears in a retired chamber of a stately baronial home. When, long years after, Marian—still Marian Herbert—visited her Canadian cousin, Liliás led her to Captain Percival's quiet resting-place in the little churchyard at Oakridge, where, by Major Meredith's desire, his remains had been laid. And then, at last, one mourner wept over the stranger's grave tears of real, bitter, even penitential grief. For she had long since taught herself to believe that her own haughty petulance alone had been to blame for the cloud of pride and misunderstanding that had arisen between them. And Liliás had never told her that which would have grieved

her unnecessarily, and marred the unbroken memory to which she clung as the one ray of brightness left amid the shadows that had fallen upon her earthly life.

All that remains to be told must be told briefly, for the story has already exceeded its allotted limits. What the death of Brock was to the Canadians may be well imagined;—the stunning, almost paralyzing effect of the tidings that their brave and trusted General had been taken from them at a time when they felt that they could so ill spare him; when, in the words of the late Chief Justice Robinson, “they looked forward to a dark and perilous future, and felt that the earth was closing upon him in whom, more than in all other human means of defence, their confidence had been reposed.” But a week before the battle in which he fell, the guns of the Tower of London were celebrating the brilliant capture of Detroit, and men now spoke of him who had passed beyond the reach of all earthly honours, as SIR ISAAC BROCK. His knightly spurs had been won, and won gallantly;—but only to be laid upon his tomb.

With heavy-hearted mourning, most deep and genuine;—amid the tears of his own brave and attached 49th regiment,—the unaffected grief of the militia who had so revered and trusted him, and the deep sorrow plainly traceable on the dark faces of his Indian warriors, who silently grieved much for the loss of their loved and revered British chief—he was laid with all the solemn

pomp of military honours, yet with the endeavour to respect his "native simplicity," in his temporary grave in a newly finished bastion of Fort George; while the minute-guns of the fort blended with those of Fort Niagara,—a tribute to the departed General even from the American shore! Twelve years later, on the anniversary of the battle of Queenston Heights, his remains were removed to the scene of the engagement, where a stately column, seen afar, perpetuates the honour of his name—a name never to be forgotten in Canada.

Throughout the whole country the same universal grief prevailed,* clouding the joy of present victory with sorrow for him who was gone, and with misgiving for the future :—

"On every brow the cloud of sadness hung,
The sounds of triumph died on every tongue."

"Oh Canada, the beauty of Israel is slain on thy high places; how are the mighty fallen!" exclaimed the enthu-

* The sorrow for the loss of General Brock extended to all classes and ages. The following lines were written on his death by "an extraordinary child of thirteen years old," daughter of Lieut.-Col. Bruyere of the Royal Engineers ;

"As Fame alighted on the mountain's crest
She loudly blew her trumpet's mighty blast ;
Ere she repeated Victory's notes she cast
A look around, and stopped, of power bereft.
Her bosom heaved, her breath she drew with pain,
Her favourite, Brock, lay slaughtered on the plain,
Glory threw on his grave a laurel wreath,
And Fame proclaims—"a hero sleeps beneath."

siastic young missionary,—still surviving,—who preached his funeral sermon; and men felt as if the prop and mainstay of the country were removed.* But the waves of time gradually closed over the departed General, as they do over humbler men; and though he left no leader who could fill his place, and though mistakes were made, and the war was protracted far beyond the time which, in all probability, would have closed it had his life been spared, yet, amid all vicissitudes, the spirit which had enabled Brock, at the crisis of Canada's fate, to rally her to brave resistance, inspired her people still.

Ernest Heathcote speedily recovered from a flesh-

* The following is the general order on the subject of Sir Isaac Brock's death, which was transmitted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir George Prevost, and by him, strange to say, at the time almost entirely suppressed.

Dec. 8, 1812. "His Royal Highness the Prince Regent is fully aware of the severe loss which His Majesty's service has experienced in the death of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock. This would have been sufficient to have clouded a victory of much greater importance. His Majesty has lost in him not only an able and meritorious officer, but one who, in the exercise of his functions of provisional Lieutenant Governor of the Province, displayed qualities admirably adapted to awe the disloyal, to reconcile the wavering, and to animate the great mass of the inhabitants against successive attempts of the enemy to invade the province, in the last of which he unhappily fell, too prodigal of that life of which his eminent services had taught us to understand the value."

To this public testimony, the following private one may be added, written soon after his fall, by a personal friend:—"General Brock was indeed a hero, a hero in the only true and in the most extensive sense; resembling what history or fable has represented rather as the offspring of the imagination than a personage that could have real existence, so entirely was every good and great quality comprehended in his character."

wound which he had received during the engagement of Queenston Heights, which, when the excitement was over, he found had been severer than he at first knew. Notwithstanding the pain it caused him, however, he insisted on attending the body of Percival to its resting-place in Oakridge churchyard. He rode over on Hector, Percival's bequest, who looked wonderingly at his new master, as he mounted him with a strange mingling of regret and compunction in his heart. When the quiet interment was over, and the little band of soldiers who had attended the body of their officer had retired, after firing the customary salute over his grave, Ernest remained for an hour alone on the spot where we first encountered him, thinking, under the yellow and fast thinning foliage, thoughts for which he was the better during all his future life.

It need hardly be added that his convalescence was a pleasant one, spent, as it was, at Dunlathmon, where Lilius and her father were prisoners for some weeks, till the latter was well enough to be removed to Oakridge. Major Meredith's wounds proved tedious enough, and it was long before he could use his right arm again, or go about without his crutches. While so disabled he found it impossible to dispense with Ernest's efficient aid, and as military operations on the Niagara frontier were for a time suspended, Ernest was able to gratify what were the wishes of all concerned without infringing on his duties as a volunteer. The Major's warm heart had turned

to him once more, with a strength of reaction all the greater for the previous estrangement. Everything became fully explained, and as the Major felt more and more dependent upon Ernest, and became more and more awake to his value, his abilities and his faithfulness, his inward opposition to the idea of his becoming his son-in-law gradually melted away. No one knew exactly how it came about, but by degrees, it became a settled matter that Ernest was, ere long, to hold the rights, as he was already performing the duties of a son.

It does not fall within the compass of our story to follow the war through its various succeeding phases, to describe the worrying vicissitudes, the encounters on lake and shore, that kept the country in turmoil and anxiety for years; or the lurid flames of Newark, that, lighted by a dastardly enemy's hand, shed their glare on the snowy fields, and left numbers of families homeless in the rigour of a Canadian winter. In most of these events Ernest and Liliás had their full share of active and passive interest, and not a little suffering and anxiety; but they went through them hand in hand, finding, in the open and acknowledged bond that united them, a fruitful source of mutual help and strength. And both had learned lessons of trust and rest in a higher love and wisdom that they could never forget; so that Liliás never suffered, during any of Ernest's future absences, as she had done during the engagement of Queenston Heights.

When the following June came round, bearing its wealth of leaves and blossoms,—in the comparative lull that followed the exciting time of the American capture of Fort George and the battle of Stony Creek,—there was a quiet wedding at Oakridge; and Marjorie, a quieter, more subdued Marjorie than of old, officiated as bridesmaid. She remained faithful for some years in her romantic devotion to the memory of her departed hero; but eventually a new and more ordinary affection took its place, and she became the energetic and high-spirited wife of one who subsequently bore a prominent part in Canadian public life. But, before that time came, she had learned to find for her hero-worship a still higher Ideal, and to lay it at the only shrine where such passionate homage can safely be laid.

Rachel Thurstane's childish fancy for her unworthy lover was not strong enough to cause any noticeable grief for his death. Not long after the final conclusion of the war, she was satisfactorily married to a neighbouring farmer, no one save those most concerned having known what a blight her opening life had so narrowly escaped. For Bill Davis, the only other repository of the secret, ere long disappeared from the neighbourhood, after having been discovered to be acting the part of a double-faced spy, deceiving in turn both Americans and Canadians.

It is not necessary to trace here in detail the ways in which Ernest Heathcote's future life eventually shaped

itself, and the opportunities for the definite work he had longed for, that gradually opened themselves before him when the anxious war was at length over, and the country had resumed the peaceful and even tenor of its way. Suffice it to say that he remained true to the aspirations of his youth, strengthened and defined by the influence of the emotions and experiences which the war had developed; and that Lilius and he endeavoured, throughout the changing scenes of after life, to live, not for themselves, but for the true welfare of the country for which he had once been ready to lay down his life.

For, if "it is a sweet and a becoming thing to die for one's country" when that is necessary, it is no less becoming and honourable to *live* to serve it, when God has so ordained. As the great poet of Germany has said: "We cannot all serve our country in the same way, but each may do his best, according as God has endowed him."

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.—Instead of referring, by scattered foot-notes, to authorities consulted, the Author desires here, once for all, gratefully to acknowledge obligations to the following works:—Tupper's "Life of General Brock," Colonel Coffin's "War of 1812," Dr. Canniff's "Settlement of Upper Canada," Mrs. Jameson's "Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada," and a Funeral Sermon on General Brock," by Rev. W. Smart; as well as to other books bearing incidentally on the history of the time.

BELL & CO., PRINTERS,
CITY STEAM PRESS, NO. 13 ADELAIDE STREET EAST,
TORONTO, ONT.

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